THE WORKS OF

THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

VOLUME TEN

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY

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CONSTANTINOPLE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

THE ATHENAEUM SOCIETY

NEW YORK

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UNIVERSITY PRESS · JOHN WILSON
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Contents

Introduction	*Page*	3
Syra and Smyrna	"	13
The Troad and the Dardanelles	"	26
The Little Field of the Dead. The Golden Horn	"	42
A Night in Ramazan	"	53
Cafés	"	68
The Shops	"	74
Bazaars	"	82
The Whirling Dervishes	"	96
The Howling Dervishes	"	103
The Cemetery at Scutari	"	110
The Sultan at the Mosque	"	126
Women	"	134
The Breaking of the Fast	"	146
The Walls of Constantinople	"	159
Balata. The Phanar. A Turkish Bath	"	166
The Beiram	"	176
Fires	"	192
Saint Sophia and the Mosques	"	204
The Seraglio	"	220
The Atmeïdan	"	234
The Elbiceï Atika	"	248
Mount Bougourlou. Princes' Islands	"	264
The Bosphorus	"	277
Buyoukdereh	"	290

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List of Illustrations

The Hostess was sumptuously dressed . *Frontispiece*

The Walls of Constantinople . . . . *Page* 163

Introduction

CONSTANTINOPLE

Introduction

WHAT a charming travelling-companion is Théophile Gautier, and how well he compensates those who are not fortunate enough to imitate him in his wanderings and must fain be content to read of foreign places and cities strange. Spain, Venice, and Constantinople form three volumes of absolute and continual delight; for surely no one can write more entertainingly, more charmingly concerning Granada, Seville, the Queen of the Adriatic, and the City of Stamboul. Gautier's peculiar gift, in some respects greater even than Hugo's, of making his readers actually behold what he describes and live the scenes he relates, makes of him the rarest of writers of travel. The impression he makes on the mind is so vivid that it requires but a slight stretch of the imagination to believe that one has been present at a bull-fight with him, watching Montes slay the fierce "Napoleon";

travelled in his company and that of Lanza the cosario across the mountains to Velez-Malaga; rambled through the Alhambra and the Generalife, and watched the sunset tints slowly fade away on the crests of the Sierra Nevada. Without stirring from one's fireside, one floats on the blue waters of the Lagoon, gazing at the marvellous prospect of Venice stretching out with the Campanile, San Marco, and the Palace of the Doges, every detail of which, suffused in rosy light, is recognised as if one had lived in the place as long as Byron or Browning. Indeed, it is quite possible that many readers of Gautier have an infinitely clearer vision of the City of the Lagoons than many who have travelled through it with the customary haste of tourists anxious to take in as much of Europe as they can compass during a brief summer-trip.

So with Constantinople: Stamboul, Pera, Galata, Scutari emerge from the haze of imagination and become real, tangible, familiar. The force, the directness, the accuracy of Gautier's account fix indelibly in the mind the features and general aspect of the Ottoman capital. There is no escaping the spell under which he lays his reader; no avoiding the actual knowledge, intimate and close, which he imparts. The

brilliancy of the illuminations, the sombre ride round the walls, the bustling nights of Ramazan, the splendour of the Beïram, the rush and tumult of the conflagration, the swift, sunlit passage down the Bosphorus, the shimmering, gleaming glories of the Bezestan, the hideous repulsiveness of the Ghetto, — all are brought out with unmatched skill; and as long as the reader listens to the words Gautier speaks, so long is he in Constantinople, climbing the steep streets of Pera, wandering by the Sweet Waters of Europe, roaming through the Cemeteries, watching the pipemakers drilling pipestems, or casting a sly glance at the momentarily unveiled face of a beauty of the harem.

There is a distinct method in Gautier's selection of the countries and places he chooses to write about at some length. He has not given us much about England, Belgium, Holland, or Germany; not that he failed to be interested in them, but that they lacked the peculiar charm of exoticism which, for him and the other Romanticists, attached to Spain, Venice, Florence, Padua, the East. These were the places he had dreamed of; there were light of a quality, of a luminousness unknown in Northern climes; a wealth of luxury, a gorgeousness of costume, a strangeness of

manners utterly unlike the North; a going back from the cold, practical civilisation which, like a dutiful disciple of Rousseau, he professed to abhor. They were the countries of romance, the fairylands of his hot, artistic youth, and for them he had longed, to them he had looked, nourishing the hope that some day he might wander through their cities, behold their mysterious beauties, and revel in their poetry. Africa and Egypt drew him in turn, and, if he went to Russia, it was because sent there, and not because the country had any special attraction. Yet there also the strangeness, the picturesqueness, the oddity of costume, manners, dress, buildings, filled him with satisfaction, excited his artistic instinct, and made him taste anew the joy he had experienced in other and sunnier lands.

Gautier was intensely in earnest when travelling and sight-seeing; he was no mere globe-trotter who cares only to cover the greatest possible amount of country, to gallop through the finest scenery, to hurry through historical cities. He wanted to know each place, and if one, like Venice, like Granada, like Constantinople, particularly charmed him, there he would stay, enjoying every hour, every moment, and, in his brilliant accounts, making the world share the

delight he himself felt. He became one of the inhabitants for the time being; he threw off, as far as he could, the Parisian, and endeavoured to enter into the nature of the Spaniard, the Venetian, the Turk, or the Russian. He wore the dress of the natives; he fed as they did; sought, in a word, to be one of them. But he was even better than that, for he bore with him everywhere his deep feeling for beauty, his intense sense of the picturesque, his magical power of understanding and reproducing colour, his wonderful encyclopædic knowledge; and the Turk or Spaniard, the Russian or Venetian into whom he transformed himself was ever a poet and a painter.

In an article written for *l'Illustration* in March, 1867, he thus sums up his wanderings and his mode of sight-seeing: —

"In May, 1840, I started for Spain. I cannot describe the spell cast upon me by that wild, poetic country, which I dreamed of under the influence of Alfred de Musset's 'Tales of Spain and Italy,' and Hugo's 'Orientales.' Once there I felt I was on my own ground, and as if I had found again my native country. Ever since, my one thought has been to get a little money together and be off travelling. The

passion, or the disease, of travel had developed in me. In 1845, in the hottest month of the year, I visited the whole of French Africa, accompanying Marshal Bugeaud on the first campaign in Kabylia against Bel Kasem or Kase, and it was in the camp of Aÿn el Arba that I had the pleasure of writing the last letter of Edgar de Meilhen, the character I had charge of in the epistolary novel called 'The Berny Cross,' written in collaboration with Mme. du Girardin, Méry, and Sandeau. I pass over brief trips to England, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland. I travelled through Italy in 1850, and I went to Constantinople in 1852. These excursions have been described in my books. More recently the publishers of an art work, the text of which I had engaged to write, sent me to Russia in the depth of winter, and I was thus enabled to enjoy the delights of the land of snow and ice. In the early summer I pushed on to Nijni-Novgorod at the time of the fair. That is the farthest point from Paris which I have reached. If I had been wealthy, I should have lived a wandering life. I have a wonderful facility for adapting myself easily to the life of different peoples. I am a Russian in Russia, a Turk in Turkey, a Spaniard in Spain. To the latter country I returned several times,

drawn by my fondness for bull-fights, which caused the *Revue des Deux Mondes* to call me 'a stout, jovial and sanguinary individual.' I used to be a great admirer of cathedrals, thanks to 'Notre-Dame de Paris,' but the sight of the Parthenon cured me of the Gothic disease, which in truth never had a very great hold upon me."

This book on Constantinople has a value, apart from its artistic form and its splendour of phraseology, in that it is a living picture of a Stamboul that has changed much since 1852 and is still changing. The innovations introduced by Mahmoud the reformer, many of which Gautier notes as he goes, have taken root and multiplied. The latest and best work on Constantinople has no pages to match those of the French traveller; the city the latter beheld is already a city of the past. It is but too true, as Hugo laments, that "*les vielles villes s'en vont.*" It is sufficient to compare the description of the Bezestan in Grosvenor's work with that in this volume to appreciate the change which has already taken place. And it will not be wondered at, either, that Gautier's book still remains popular and is still read with fervent delight, for it is the most vivid representation of that mysterious Con-

stantinople that has haunted imaginations for centuries and even yet is enshrined in a halo of romance.

The book, of course, first saw the light in the form of letters of travel, of newspaper "copy." It was in the year 1852, at a time when the grasping policy of Russia, bent on obtaining a foothold on the Bosphorus, was creating alarm throughout Europe, and drawing Great Britain, France, and Turkey into the alliance that was marked by the breaking out of the Crimean war, that Gautier sailed for the East. He was then on the staff of *la Presse*, and it was in this journal that his letters were published from October 1, 1852, to December 3, 1853, under the title, "From Paris to Constantinople — Summer Jaunts." No sooner had the last batch of copy appeared than the publication in book form was announced, first by Eugène Didier, and next by Michel Lévy, the latter finally bringing out the volume in 1853, though it is dated 1854. The title then given it was that it has ever since borne, — "Constantinople." The book proved very popular, and many successive editions of it have since appeared.

Constantinople

CONSTANTINOPLE

SYRA AND SMYRNA

USE doth breed a habit in a man," and I might say with as much truth, he who has travelled will travel again. The thirst for sight-seeing is excited by gratification instead of being appeased. Here I am in Constantinople, and I am already thinking of going to Cairo and Egypt. Spain, Italy, Africa, England, Belgium, Holland, a part of Germany, Switzerland, the Isles of Greece, and a few ports of the Levant, which I visited at different times and on different occasions, have merely increased my love of cosmopolitan vagabondage. It may be that travelling is a dangerous element to introduce into one's life, for it excites one deeply and causes an uneasiness like that of birds of passage kept prisoners at the time of migration, if any circumstance or any duty prevents one's starting. You are aware that you are going to expose yourself to fatigue, privations, annoyances, and even perils; it is

difficult to give up pleasant habits of mind and heart, to leave family, friends, and relatives for the unknown; yet you feel it impossible to remain, nor do your friends attempt to detain you, but press your hand silently as you step into the carriage.

And ought we not, after all, to explore, in part at least, the planet upon which we keep whirling through space until its mysterious Creator is pleased to transport us into another world where we may read another page of His infinite work? Is it not clearly laziness to keep on spelling the same word without ever turning over the page? What poet would be satisfied to see a reader keep to a single one of his stanzas? So every year, unless I am detained by imperious necessity, I study some one country of the vast universe, which seems to me less vast as I traverse it and as it emerges from the vague cosmography of imagination. Without quite going to the Holy Sepulchre, to Saint Jago de Compostello, or to Mecca, I start on a pious pilgrimage to those parts of the world where God is more visible in the beauty of the sites. This time I shall see Turkey, Greece, and a portion of that Hellenic Asia in which beauty of form mingles with Oriental splendour.

SYRA AND SMYRNA

Sometime to-morrow we shall be in sight of Cape Matapan, a barbarous name which conceals the harmony of the old appellation, just as a coat of lime-wash spoils a fine carving. Cape Tænarum is the extreme point of the deeply cut fig-leaf spread out upon the sea, now called Morea, formerly named Peloponnesus. Every passenger was on deck, gazing in the direction indicated, three or four hours before anything could be made out. The magic name of Greece had started the most inert of imaginations; the *bourgeois* most averse to artistic ideas were moved. Finally a violet line showed faint above the waves. It was Greece. A mountain rose out of the waters like a nymph resting on the sand after a bath, beautiful, fair, elegant, and worthy of that land of sculpture. "What is that mountain?" I asked the captain. "Taygetus," he replied carelessly, just as he might have said, "Montmartre." As the name of Taygetus fell upon my ear, a line of the "Georgics" came back spontaneously to my mind,

". . . virginibus bacchata Lacænis
Taygeta!"

and fluttered on my lips like a monotonous refrain that satisfied my thoughts. What better can one address to a Greek mountain than a line of Vergil? Although it

was in the middle of June and fairly warm, the summit of the mountain was silvered with snow, and I thought of the rosy feet of the lovely maids of Laconia who traversed Taygetus as Bacchantes, and left their charming footprints upon the white paths.

Cape Matapan stretches out between two deep gulfs which it divides, the Gulf of Koron and that of Kolokythia. It is an arid, bare point of land, like all the coasts of Greece. After passing it you are shown on the right a mass of tawny rocks cracked by dryness, calcined by heat, without a trace of verdure or even of loam. It is Cerigo, or Cythera of old, the island of myrtles and roses, the place beloved of Venus, whose name sums up all voluptuousness. What would Watteau have said, with his "Departure" for his blue and rosy Cythera, in the presence of that bare shore of crumbling rock, its hard contours standing out under a shadowless sun, and better fitted for a cavern for a penitent anchorite than for a lovers' grove? Gérard de Nerval at least had the pleasure of seeing on the shores of Cythera a man hanged, wrapped up in oil-cloth, which proves that justice is careful and comfortable in that part of the world.

Our vessel was too far away from land to allow the passengers to enjoy such a graceful detail, even if all the gibbets in the island had been in use at that moment. Did the ancients lie? Did they imagine lovely sites where now exist only a rocky isle and a bare land? It is difficult to suppose that their descriptions, the accuracy of which it was then easy to verify, can have been utterly fanciful. No doubt this land, worn out by human activity, has at last been exhausted. It died with the civilisation it supported, exhausted by masterpieces, genius, and heroism. What we behold is merely the skeleton; the skin and the muscles have fallen into dust. When the soul is withdrawn from a country, it dies like a body. Else how are we to explain so complete and general a difference? — for what I have just said is applicable to almost the whole of Greece. And yet these shores, desolate though they be, have still fine lines and pure colours.

By morning we were opposite Syra. Seen from the roads, Syra greatly resembles Algiers, on a smaller scale, of course. On a mountainous background of the warmest tone, sienna or burnt topaz, place a triangle dazzlingly white, the base of which is laved by the sea, and the apex of which is a church, and you have an

exact idea of the city, which but yesterday was a shapeless heap of hovels and which the transformation into a coaling port for steamers will soon make the queen of the Cyclades. Wind-mills with eight or nine sails break the sharp silhouette. There was not a tree, not a blade of green grass as far as the eye could see. A great number of vessels of all forms and all sizes were crowded along the shore, their slender rigging showing black against the white houses of the town. Boats were coming and going with joyous animation; earth, sea, and heaven were inundated with light; life broke out in every direction. Boats were pulling fast towards our vessel and formed a regatta of which we were the finish.

Soon the deck was covered with a swarm of bronze-complexioned fellows with hooked noses, flashing eyes, fierce moustaches, who offered their services in the same tone as elsewhere one is called upon for one's purse or one's life. Some wore Greek caps (they had a perfect right to do so), vast trousers very much like petticoats, pleated woollen sashes, and dark-blue cloth jackets; others wore kilts, white vests, and cotton caps, or else small straw hats with a black cord. One of them was superbly costumed, and seemed to be posing

for a water-colour sketch in an album. He deserved the epithet which speakers in Homer addressed to the hearers whom they desired to flatter, *euknemides Achaioi* (well-booted Greeks), for he had the handsomest *piqué*, embroidered *knemids*, ornamented with tufts of red silk, which it is possible to imagine. His closely pleated kilt, dazzlingly clean, spread out like a bell; a tightly drawn sash set off his wasp-like waist; his vest, braided, trimmed, and adorned with filigree buttons, gave passage to the sleeves of a fine linen shirt, and on his shoulders was elegantly thrown a handsome red jacket stiff with ornaments and arabesques. This superb individual was neither more nor less than a dragoman who acts as guide to travellers on their trips through Greece, and no doubt he desired to flatter his clients by this show of local colour, just as the handsome maids of Procida and Nisida put on their velvet and gold costumes for English tourists only.

Syra presents the peculiarity of being a city in ruins and a growing city, a rather strange contrast. In the lower town one comes everywhere upon scaffoldings; building stones and débris fill the streets; houses are visibly growing up; in the upper town, everything is

falling and going to ruin. Life has left the head and taken refuge in the feet.

A sort of very steep roadway separates New Syra from Old Syra. Once the bridge has been crossed, one has to climb almost vertical streets paved like torrent beds. With two or three comrades I scaled them between ruinous walls, fallen-in hovels, over loose stones and pigs that got out of the way with a yelp and scurried off, rubbing their bluish backs against my legs. Through half-opened doors I caught sight of haggard old witches cooking strange dishes on a fire blazing in the shadow. Men with the looks of melodrama brigands put aside their narghilehs and watched our little caravan go by with a very ungracious expression of countenance.

The slope became so steep that we were almost compelled to go on all-fours, through obscure labyrinths, vaulted passages, and ruinous stairs. The houses are built one above another, so that the threshold of the upper one is on the level of the terraced top of the lower. Every dwelling looks as if, in order to reach the top of the mountain, it had set foot on the head of the one below, on a road intended apparently more for goats than for men. The peculiar advantage of Old

Syra seems to be that it is easily accessible to hawks and eagles only. It is an admirable location for the eyries of birds of prey, but a most unsuitable one for human habitations.

Breathless and perspiring, we at last reached the narrow platform upon which rises the church of Saint George, — a platform paved with tombstones, under which rest the aerial dead; and here we were fully compensated by the magnificent panorama for the fatigue we had endured. Behind us rose the crest of the mountain upon which Syra is built; on the right, looking seaward, fell away an immense ravine broken and torn in the most wildly romantic fashion; at our feet sank in successive terraces the white houses of upper and lower Syra; farther in the distance shone the sea with its luminous gleam, and the circle of Delos, Mykone, Tino, and Andro, which the setting sun bathed in rose and changing tints that, if they were represented in painting, would be declared impossible.

The next day we were to sail for Smyrna, and I was for the first time to set foot on the Asian land, the cradle of the world, the happy place where rises the sun and which it leaves regretfully to light the West.

CONSTANTINOPLE

At early dawn we entered the roads of Smyrna, which form a graceful curve, at the bottom of which spreads out the town. The first thing that struck my eyes at that distance was the great screen of cypresses rising above the houses, mingling their black tops with the white shafts of the minarets, the whole still bathed in shadow and surmounted by an old, ruined fortress, the walls of which stood out against the lighted sky and formed a sort of amphitheatre behind the buildings. It was no longer the bare and desolate shores of Greece; the land of Asia appeared, smiling and fresh in the rosy light of dawn.

It would be a grievous mistake to leave Smyrna without visiting the Caravan Bridge. This celebrated bridge, which unfortunately has been disfigured by an ugly balustrade of cast iron, crosses a small river a few inches in depth, in which were quietly swimming half a dozen ducks, as if the divine blind man had not washed his dusty feet in those waters which three thousand years have not dried up. The stream is the Meles, whence Homer was called Melesigenes. It is true that some scholars deny that this brook is the Meles, but other scholars, still more learned, maintain that Homer never lived, which simplifies the question

considerably. I, who am but a poet, willingly accept the legend which has fixed a thought and a remembrance upon a place already charming in itself.

Great plane-trees, under which a café has been erected, shade one of the banks; on the other superb cypresses tell of a cemetery. Let not this name awaken any gloomy thoughts in your mind. Dainty tombs of white marble, diapered with pretty Turkish letters on sky-blue or apple-green backgrounds and of a form entirely different from Christian sepulchres, shine gaily under the trees as the sunbeams light upon them. At most they excite in those who are not accustomed to them a slight melancholy which is not without its charm.

At the farther end is a sort of custom house and guard house, occupied by a few of the Zebecs, whose appearance is familiar to every one, thanks to Decamps' paintings of Asiatic scenes. They wear high, conical turbans, short white linen drawers very full behind, huge sashes which reach from the loins almost to the armpits, and which are formidably full of yataghans and kandjar-hilts; they have bare legs the colour of Cordova leather, hooked noses, and huge moustaches. Lying lazily on a bench were three or four scoundrels,

very honest fellows, no doubt, but who looked a great deal more like brigands than customs inspectors.

To rest our animals we had seated ourselves under the plane-trees, and pipes and mastic had been brought to us. Mastic is a sort of liquor much drunk in the Levant, especially in the Greek Islands, and the best comes from Khio. It is alcohol in which has been melted a perfumed gum. It is drunk with water, which it freshens and whitens like eau de cologne. It is the oriental absinthe. This local drink recalled to me the small glasses of *aguardiente* which I used to drink some twelve years ago on the ride from Granada to Malaga, as I was going to the bull-fight with Lanza the *arriero*, wearing my *majo* costume that had such a splendid pot of flowers embroidered on the back, and which is now, alas! all moth-eaten.

While we were smoking and sipping our mastic, a procession of some fifteen camels, preceded by an ass tinkling its bell, passed across the bridge with that singular ambling pace characteristic also of the elephant and the giraffe, their backs rounded and their long ostrich-necks waving. The strange silhouette of that ugly animal, which seems created for a special nature, surprises one, and impresses on you the fact

that you are away from home. When you meet in the open those curious animals shown at home in menageries, you distinctly feel that you have left Paris. We also saw two women carefully veiled, accompanied by a negro with a repulsive face, no doubt a eunuch. The East was beginning to exhibit itself unmistakably, and the most paradoxical mind could not have maintained that we were still in Paris.

CONSTANTINOPLE

THE TROAD AND THE DARDANELLES

GREAT was my regret at having to leave Smyrna so soon, with its Asiatic and voluptuous grace. As I hastened to the boat, my glance plunged eagerly into the half-opened doors, through which I could see courts paved with marble, cooled by fountains, like the Andalusian *patios*, and verdant gardens, calm and shady oases embellished by lovely girls in white and soft coloured wrappers, wearing elegant Greek head-dresses, and grouped as would love to have them a painter and a poet. My regret was for the fine streets of this city, the Street of Roses and the neighbouring ones, for the Jewish quarter and certain parts of the Turkish quarter are wretchedly sordid and hideously dilapidated. Truth compels me not to conceal this reverse of the medal.

In spite of its great antiquity, — it existed already in the days of Homer, — Smyrna has preserved few remains of its former splendour. For my part, I saw no

other antique ruins than three or four huge Roman columns rising by the frail modern structures at their feet. These columns, the remains of a temple of Jupiter or of Fortune, I am not sure which, have a fine effect, and must have excited the sagacity of scholars. I merely caught sight of them from the back of an ass as I passed by, so that I cannot express any satisfactory opinion about them.

The Asiatic shore is much less barren than the European, and I remained on deck as long as the daylight enabled me to distinguish the outline of the land.

The next morning at dawn we had passed Mitylene, the antique Lesbos, the country of Sappho. A flat shore spread out before us on the right. It was the Troad, —

"Campos ubi Troja fuit," —

the very soil of epic poetry, the theatre of immortal verse, the place twice consecrated by the genius of Greece and of Rome, by Homer and by Vergil. It is strange to find one's self thus in the very centre of poetry and mythology. Like Æneas relating his story to Dido from his raised couch, I can say from the quarter-deck, and with greater truth, —

"Est in conspectu Tenedos," —

for there is the island whence glided the serpents that bound in their folds the unfortunate Laocoön and his sons, and furnished a subject for one of the masterpieces of sculpture; Tenedos, on which reigns the mighty Phœbus Apollo, the god of the silver bow invoked by Chryses; and farther on, the shore which Protesilaus, the first victim of a war that was to destroy a people, tinged with his blood as with a propitiatory libation. The mass of vague ruins, faintly seen in the distance, is the Scæan Gates, through which issued Hector wearing the helmet with the red aigrette that terrified little Astyanax, and before which sat down in the shade the old men who, in Homer, bowed before Helen's beauty. The dark mountain clothed with a mantle of forest, which rises on the horizon, is Ida, the scene of the judgment of Paris, where the three lovely goddesses, Hera, with the snowy arms, Pallas Athene with the sea-green eyes, and Aphrodite with the magic cestus, posed nude before the fortunate shepherd; where Anchises enjoyed the intoxication of a celestial hymen, and made Venus the mother of Æneas. The fleet of the Greeks was moored along this shore; on it rested the prows of their black vessels partly drawn up on the sand. The accuracy of the Homeric description

is plainly evident in every detail of the place; a strategist could follow, Iliad in hand, every phase of the siege.

While thus recalling my classical remembrances, I gaze upon the Troad, Stalimene, the ancient Lemnos, which received Hephæstus hurled from heaven, rises over the sea, and shows behind me its yellowish promontories. Would I were two-faced like Janus! Two eyes indeed are but little, and man is greatly inferior in this respect to the spider, which has eight thousand according to Leuwenhoeck and Swammerdam. I turn for one moment to cast a glance at the volcanic isle where were forged the arms of proof of the heroes favoured by the gods, and the golden tripods, living metal slaves that served the Olympians in their celestial dwellings, and the captain draws me by the sleeve to point out upon the Trojan shore a rounded hillock, a conical hill, the regular form of which speaks of man's handiwork. The tumulus covers the remains of Antilochus, the son of Nestor and Eurydice, the first Greek who slew a Trojan at the beginning of the siege, and who perished himself by Hector's hands while warding off a blow aimed at his father by Memnon. Does Antilochus really rest under that mound? no doubt the

discursive critics will say. Tradition affirms that he does, and why should tradition lie?

As we proceed we discover two other tumuli not far from a little village called Yeni Scheyr, recognisable by a row of nine wind-mills like those of Syra. Nearer to Smyrna, and also nearer to the shore, is the tomb of Patroclus, brother in arms and inseparable companion of Achilles. There was raised the gigantic pile watered with the blood of innumerable victims, on which the hero, mad with grief, cast four costly horses, two thorough-bred dogs, and ten young Trojans slain with his own hand, and around which the mourning army celebrated funeral games which lasted many days. The second, more inland, is the tomb of Achilles himself; such, at least, is the name given to it. According to the Homeric tradition, the ashes of Achilles were mingled with those of Patroclus in a golden urn and thus the two great friends, undivided in life, were not separated in death. The gods were moved by the hero's fate. Thetis rose from the sea with a plaintive chorus of Nereids, the Nine Muses wept and sang hymns of grief around the funeral bed, and the bravest in the army performed bloody games in honour of the hero. The tumulus is no doubt that of some other Greek or

Trojan, that of Hector perhaps. In Alexander's days, the place of the tomb of the hero of the Iliad was well known, for the conqueror of Asia stopped there, saying that Achilles was very fortunate to have had such a friend as Patroclus and such a poet as Homer; he had only Hephæstion and Quintus Curtius; yet his exploits surpassed those of the son of Peleus, and for once history triumphed over mythology.

While I am discoursing on Homeric geography and the heroes of the Iliad, — a very innocent piece of pedantry which may well be forgiven in the presence of Troy, — our steamer continues on its way, somewhat retarded by a north wind blowing from the Black Sea, and proceeds towards the Strait of the Dardanelles, which is defended by two castles, the one on the Asiatic, the other on the European shore. Their cross fire bars the entrance to the Strait and renders access to it, if not impossible, at least very difficult for a hostile fleet. Before I leave the Troad, let me add that beyond Yeni Scheyr falls into the Bosphorus a stream claimed by some to be the Simois and by others the Granicus.

The Hellespont, or Sea of Helle, is very narrow. It is more like the mouth of a great river than a sea.

Its breadth is not greater than that of the Thames at Gravesend. As the wind was fair to run into the Ægean Sea we passed through a fleet of vessels going in that direction with all sails set.

The European shore, which we kept close aboard, is formed of steep hills spotted with vegetation. The general aspect is rather barren and monotonous. The Asiatic shore is much more smiling, and presents, I know not why, an appearance of Northern verdure which would seem more suitable to Europe. At one time we were so close to the shore that we could make out five Turkish horsemen riding along a narrow foot-path stretching along the foot of the cliff like a narrow yellow ribbon. They formed a scale which gave me an idea of the height of the shore, which is much greater than I should have supposed. It is near this place that Xerxes built the bridge intended for the crossing of his army, and caused the disrespectful sea, which had been rude enough to break it, to be beaten with rods. Judged on the spot, this enterprise, mentioned in all books of morals as the very acme of human pride, seems, on the contrary, quite reasonable. It is also supposed that Sestos and Abydos, made famous by the loves of Hero and Leander, were situated about

here, where the Hellespont is not much more than eight hundred and seventy-five yards wide. Lord Byron, as every one knows, repeated, without being in love, Leander's swimming exploit, but instead of Hero on the shore, holding up her torch as a guiding light, he found fever only. He took an hour and ten minutes to traverse the distance, and was prouder of the performance than of having written "Childe Harold" or "The Corsair."

I cannot tell you much about the Sea of Marmora itself, for it was dark when we traversed it, and I was asleep in my cabin, worn out by fourteen hours' watching on deck. Above Gallipoli it broadens considerably and narrows again at Constantinople. When day dawned, on the Asiatic side the Bithynian Olympus, covered with eternal snows, was rising in the rosy vapours of morning with changing tints and silvery sheen. The European shore, infinitely less picturesque, was spotted with white houses and clumps of verdure, above which rose tall brick chimneys, the obelisks of industry, the ruddy material of which, seen from a distance, is a very fair imitation of the rose granite of Egypt. If I did not fear being accused of indulging in a paradox, I would say that the whole of

this part recalled to me the appearance of the Thames between the Isle of Dogs and Greenwich: the sky, very milky, very opaline, almost covered with transparent haze, still further increased the illusion.

In the blue distance loomed the Archipelago of the Princes' Islands, a great Sunday resort. In a few minutes more Stamboul would appear to us in all its splendour. Already, on the left, through the silvery gauze of the mist, showed up a few minarets; the Castle of the Seven Towers, where formerly ambassadors were imprisoned, bristled with its massive towers connected by crenellated walls; its base plunges into the sea, and it backs up against the hill. It is from this castle that start the old ramparts that surround the city as far as Eyoub. The Turks call it Yedi Kouleh, and the Greeks called it Heptapyrgion. It was built by the Byzantine emperors, commenced by Zeno and completed by the Komnenoi. Viewed from the sea, it appears to be in very bad condition, ready to fall in ruins. It is, however, very effective with its heavy form, its squat towers, its thick walls, and its look of a Bastile and a fortress.

Our steamer, slowing down so as not to arrive too early, shaved Seraglio Point. It is a series of long,

whitewashed walls, the crenellations of which stand out against gardens of terebinth and cypress trees, of cabinets with trellised windows, kiosks with projecting roofs and without any symmetry. It is very far from the magnificence of the "Thousand and One Nights" which the single word "seraglio" calls up in the least excitable imagination; and I must confess that these wooden boxes with close bars, that contain the beauties of Georgia, Circassia, and Greece, the houris of that paradise of Mohammed of which the Padishah has the key, are uncommonly like hen-coops. We are constantly confounding Arab architecture and Turkish architecture, which have no relation to each other, and involuntarily we turn the seraglio into an Alhambra, which is far from being the truth. These disappointing remarks do not prevent the old Seraglio from having an agreeable aspect, with its dazzling whiteness and its sombre verdure, between the blue sky and the blue sea, the rapid current of which laves its mysterious walls.

As we passed, we were shown an inclined plane jutting out of an opening in the wall and projecting over the sea. That is the spot, we were told, where were cast into the Bosphorus faithless odalisques

and those who for some reason or another had fallen into disgrace with the master. They were enclosed in a sack containing a cat and a serpent.

We have doubled Seraglio Point. The steamer stops at the entrance to the Golden Horn. A marvellous panorama is outspread before me like an operatic stage-setting in a fairy sky. The Golden Horn is a gulf of which the Old Seraglio and the landing at Top Khaneh form the two ends, and which penetrates the city, built like an amphitheatre upon its two banks, as far as the Sweet Waters of Europe and the mouth of the Barbyses, a small stream which flows into it. The name of Golden Horn comes, no doubt, from the fact that it represents to the city a true cornucopeia, owing to the commodity it offers to shipping, commerce, and naval construction. On the right, beyond the sea, is a huge white building, regularly pierced with several rows of windows flanked at its angles with turrets surmounted by flagstaffs. It is a barracks, the largest but not the most characteristic of Scutari, the Turkish name of the Asiatic suburb of Constantinople, which extends, ascending towards the Black Sea, from the site of the former Chrysopolis, of which no traces remain. A

little farther, in the centre of the waters, rises upon a rocky islet a dazzlingly white lighthouse, which is called Leander's Tower, and also the Maiden's Tower, although the place has no connection whatever with the legend of the two lovers celebrated by Musæus. The tower, of elegant shape and which in the clear light looks like alabaster, stands out beautifully against the dark blue of the sea.

At the entrance to the Golden Horn lies Top Khaneh with its landing place, its arsenal, and its mosque with bold dome, and slender minarets, built by Sultan Mahmoud. The palace of the Russian Embassy raises amid red-tiled roofs and clumps of trees its proudly dominating façade which compels the glance, and seems already to seize upon the city; while the palaces of the other embassies are satisfied with a more modest appearance. The Tower of Galata, in the Frankish business quarter, rises from the centre of the houses, topped by a pointed cap of verdigrised copper, and overlooks the old Genoese walls falling in ruins at its feet. Pera, the residence of the Europeans, outspreads on the top of a hill its cypresses and its stone houses, that contrast with the Turkish wooden shanties, and stretch as far as the Great Field of the Dead.

The Seraglio Point forms the other extremity, and on this bank rises the city of Constantinople, properly so called. Never did a more superbly varied line meander between heaven and earth. The ground rises from the shore, and the constructions are arranged like an amphitheatre. The mosques overtopping the sea of verdure and many-coloured houses with their bluish domes and their lofty white minarets surrounded by balconies and ending in a sharp point that pierces the clear morning sky, give to the town an Oriental and fairy-like appearance, augmented by the silvery light that bathes the vaporous contours. An officious neighbour names them in order, from the Seraglio and up the Golden Horn: Saint Sophia, Saint Irenæus, Sultan Achmet, Nouri Osmanieh, Sultan Bayezid, Souleïman, Shahzadeh Djami, Sedja Djamassi, Sultan Mohammed II, Sultan Selim. Amid all these minarets, behind the façade of the Mosque Bayezid, rises to a prodigious height the Seraskierat Tower, whence warning is given of fires.

Three bridges of boats connect the two shores of the Golden Horn and allow of constant communication between the Turkish city and its suburbs, with their varied populations. As in London, there are

no quays at Constantinople, and everywhere the city is laved by the sea. Vessels of all nations draw near the houses without being kept at a respectful distance by a granite wall. Near the bridge, in the centre of the Golden Horn, were anchored flotillas of English, French, Austrian, and Turkish steamers; water omnibuses, the watermen of the Bosphorus, the Thames of Constantinople, on which is concentrated the movement and bustle of the city. Myriads of boats and caïques were darting like fishes through the azure water of the gulf and pulling towards our steamer anchored a short distance from the Custom House, which is situated between Galata and Top Khaneh.

As usual, our decks were covered in a moment by a polyglot crowd. It was an unintelligible babel of Turkish, Greek, Armenian, Italian, French, and English. I was feeling rather bothered by these conflicting dialects, although before starting I had carefully studied Covielle's Turkish speeches and the ceremony in the "Bourgeois Gentilhomme," when fortunately appeared in a caïque, like a guardian angel, the person to whom I had been recommended, and who speaks as many languages as the famous Mezzofanti. He sent to the devil, each in his own particular

idiom, every one of the rascals that crowded around me, made me enter his boat, and took me to the Custom House, where the inspectors were satisfied with casting a careless glance at my small trunk, which the *hammal* threw on his back as if it were a feather.

The hammal is a genus peculiar to Constantinople. It is a two-legged, humpless camel. It lives on cucumbers and water, and carries enormous burdens through impracticable streets, up perpendicular slopes, in overwhelming heat. Instead of hooks, it carries on its shoulders a cushion of stuffed leather, on which it places the burdens under which it is bowed down, its strength lying in its neck, like that of oxen. Its costume consists of white linen breeches, a jacket of coarse yellow stuff, and a fez with a handkerchief wrapped around it. The torso of the hammal is amazingly developed, and, curiously enough, the legs are often very thin. One finds it difficult to understand how these poor legs, covered with tanned skin and looking like flutes in a case, can support weights under which a Hercules would bend.

As I followed the hammal, who was proceeding towards the lodging reserved for me, I entered a labyrinth of streets and narrow lanes, tortuous, ignoble,

horribly paved, full of holes and pitfalls, encumbered with leprous dogs and asses carrying beams or rubbish The dazzling mirage presented by Constantinople at a distance was rapidly vanishing, Paradise was turning into a slough, poetry into prose; and I asked myself, with a feeling of melancholy, how these ugly hovels could possibly assume at a distance such a seductive aspect, such a tender and vaporous colour. I reached, walking on the heels of my hammal and clinging to the arm of my guide, the room which had been secured for me at the house of a Smyrniote woman, *copa syriska* like that of Vergil, near the High Street of Pera, bordered with buildings insignificant but in good taste, somewhat like streets of the third rank in Marseilles or Barcelona.

CONSTANTINOPLE

THE LITTLE FIELD OF THE DEAD
THE GOLDEN HORN

THE lodging which had been prepared for me was on the first floor of a house situated at the end of a street in the Frankish Quarter, the only one that Europeans are allowed to inhabit. The street leads from the end of Pera to the Little Field of the Dead. I do not indicate it more clearly for the very good reason that in Constantinople streets have no names, either Turkish or French, posted at the corners. Besides, the houses are not numbered, which increases the difficulty. Some streets, however, have a traditional name derived from a neighbouring khan or mosque, and the one in which I lived, as I learned later, was called Dervish Sokak; but the name is never written, and consequently is of no use in guiding you.

The house was built of stones, a point which was particularly insisted on to me and which is not to be disdained in a city as combustible as Constantinople.

For greater security, an iron door and shutters of thick iron plate were, in case of the neighbourhood taking fire, to intercept the flames and sparks and to isolate the house completely. I had a sitting-room with white-washed walls, a wooden ceiling painted gray and ornamented with blue lines, furnished with a long divan, a table and a Venetian mirror in a black and gold frame; and a bedroom with an iron bedstead and a chest of drawers. There was nothing particularly Eastern about it, as you see. On the other hand, my hostess was a Smyrniote; her niece, though wearing a rose-coloured wrapper after the European fashion, owned languorous Asiatic eyes that glowed in her pale face framed in by mat black hair. A very pretty Greek maid, with a little kerchief twisted on top of her head, and a sort of lout from the Cyclades, completed the staff of the house, and gave it a touch of local colour. The niece knew a little French, the aunt a little Italian, and so we managed to understand each other somewhat. Constantinople is, for the matter of that, a genuine Tower of Babel, and it would be easy to suppose it was still the day of the Confusion of Tongues. A knowledge of four languages is indispensable for the ordinary relations of life. Greek, Turkish, Italian, and

French are spoken in Pera by polyglot street boys. The famous Mezzofanti would surprise no one in Constantinople. We Frenchmen, who know our own language only, are amazed at such prodigious facility.

The Little Field of the Dead, which, by way of abbreviation, or perhaps to avoid the suggestion of a melancholy thought, is usually called the Little Field, lies on the reverse of a hill that rises from the Golden Horn, and on the crest of which is built Pera, the hill-top marked by a terrace and bordered by high houses and cafés. It is an old Turkish cemetery where no one has been buried for some years, either because there is no more room or because the dead Mahometans think they are too near the living Giaours.

A brilliant sun rained down burning light upon the slope bristling with the black foliage and gray trunks of cypresses, under which rose a host of marble posts topped by coloured turbans. These posts leaning, some to the right, some to the left, some forward and some backward, as the ground had yielded under their weight, had a vague resemblance to human forms. In several places these posts, covered with verses of the Koran, had been borne down by their own weight and, carelessly set in friable soil, had fallen or been broken in

pieces. Some of them were decapitated, the turbans lying at their base like heads cut off. It is said that these truncated tombs are those of former Janissaries, pursued beyond the confines of death by Mahmoud's rancour. There is no symmetry in this scattered cemetery, which sends a line of cypresses and tombs through the houses of Pera as far as the Tekieh, or monastery, of the Whirling Dervishes. Two or three paths built up with the débris of the funeral monuments, cross it diagonally. Here and there are small mounds, sometimes surrounded by low walls or balustrades, which are the reserved burial-places of some powerful or rich family. They usually contain a pillar ending in a huge turban, surrounded by three or four marble leaves rounded on top in the shape of a spoon handle, and a dozen smaller stones. They are in memory of a pacha, with his wives, and his children who have died young; a sort of funeral harem which keeps him company in the next world.

In the open spaces workmen are cutting door-jambs and steps; idlers are sleeping in the shade, or smoking their pipes upon a tomb; veiled women pass by, dragging their yellow boots with careless feet; children are

playing hide-and-seek behind the tombstones, uttering little glad cries; cake sellers offer their light confections incrusted with almonds; between the interstices of the fallen monuments, hens are picking up seed, cows are looking for a few blades of grass, and for lack of it feed upon old shoes and old hats; dogs have settled themselves in the excavations caused by the rotting of the biers, or rather, of the planks that support the ground around the bodies, and out of these refuges of death, enlarged by their ferocity, they have made hideous kennels for themselves.

In the more travelled spaces the tombs are worn away under the careless feet of the passers-by, and little by little disappear in dust and detritus of all kinds. The broken pillars are scattered on the ground like the pieces of a game, and are buried like the bodies which they designate, concealed by the invisible grave-diggers who remove everything that has been abandoned, whether a tomb, a temple, or a city. Here it is not solitude overspreading forgetfulness, but life taking back the place temporarily granted to death. Some denser cypress groves have nevertheless preserved a few corners of this profaned cemetery, and maintain its melancholy appearance. The doves roost in the dark

foliage, and the hawks circling in the azure sky soar above their sombre tops.

A few wooden houses built of planks, laths, and trellis-work painted red, which has turned rose-colour under rain and sun, are grouped among the trees, sunken out of plumb, and in a state of dilapidation most favourable to water-colour painters and English book-illustrators.

Before descending the slope leading to the Golden Horn, I stopped for a moment, and gazed upon the wondrous spectacle unrolled before my eyes. The foreground was formed by the Little Field and its declivities planted with cypresses and tombs; the second distance, by the brown-tiled roofs and the reddish houses of the Kassim Pacha Quarter; the middle distance, by the blue waters of the gulf that stretches from Seraï Burnou to the Sweet Waters of Europe; and the fourth, by the lines of undulating hills on the slopes of which Constantinople is built. The bluish domes of the bazaars, the white minarets of the mosques, the arches of the old aqueduct of Valens standing out against the sky like black lace, the clumps of cypresses and plane-trees, the angles of the roofs, varied that wonderful sky-line prolonged from the Seven Towers

to the heights of Eyoub; and over all, a silvery white light in which floated like transparent gauze the smoke of the steamers on the Bosphorus about to start for Therapia or Kadikeui, of a lightness of tone which formed the happiest contrast with the crude, warm firmness of the foreground.

After a few moments of thoughtful admiration, I started again, following sometimes a faint track, sometimes treading over the tombs, and I reached a network of lanes bordered by black houses inhabited by charcoal burners, blacksmiths, and other workers in iron. I said houses, but the word is rather large, and I take it back. Say hovels, dens, stalls, shanties, whatever you can imagine of smoky, dirty, wretched, but without those good old *impasto* walls, scratched, leprous, scabby, ruinous, which Decamps' trowel builds with such success in his Eastern paintings, and which give such character to hovels. Poor little asses with flapping ears and thin, raw backs, laden with charcoal and iron-work, shaved the walls of the dingy shops. Old beggar-women, seated on their haunches, their legs drawn up like those of grass-hoppers, pitifully held out to me from their ragged *ferradjehs* their hands, that resembled those of mummies after being unwrapped.

Their owl-like eyes made two brown spots in the muslin rag, bossed by the arch of the nose like the beak of a bird of prey, and drawn like a shroud over their hideous faces. Others, more alert, passed along with bowed back, their head sunk on their chest, leaning upon great sticks like Mother Goose in the pantomime prologues at the Funambules.

It is impossible to imagine to what an astounding degree of ugliness old women attain in the East, when they have absolutely given up their sex and no longer disguise themselves with the clever artifices of a complicated toilet. Here even the mask adds to the impression. What is visible is awful, what one imagines is frightful. It is a pity that the Turks do not possess a sabbath to which they could send these witches astride a broomstick.

A few Arnaut or Bulgarian hammals, bending under enormous burdens, and, like Dante in hell, not lifting one foot until they have made sure the other is firmly planted, were ascending or descending the lane; horses were travelling noisily, striking, every time they shied, sheaves of sparks from the uneven, rough pavement of this quarter, which is more industrious than fashionable.

I thus reached the Golden Horn, debouching near the white buildings of the Arsenal, which are raised upon vast sub-structures and crowned by a tower in the form of a belfry. The Arsenal, constructed in the civilised taste, has nothing interesting to a European, although the Turks are very proud of it. I did not, therefore, stop to contemplate it, but devoted my whole attention to the movement of the port, filled with vessels of all nations, traversed in every direction by caïques, and especially to the marvellous panorama of Constantinople outstretched on the other bank.

The view is so strangely beautiful that it seems unreal. It is as if there were spread out before one a stage drop intended for the setting of some Oriental fairy play, bathed by the painter's fancy and the glow of the footlights in the impossible luminousness of apotheosis. The palace of Seraï Burnou, with its Chinese roofs, its white, crenellated walls, its trellised kiosks, its gardens full of cypresses, umbrella pines, sycamores, and plane-trees; the Mosque of Sultan Achmet, with its cupola showing round among its six minarets like ivory masts; Saint Sophia raising its Byzantine dome upon heavy counterforts rayed transversely with white and rosy courses and flanked by four minarets; the

Bayezid Mosque upon which hover like a cloud flocks of doves; Yeni Djami; the Seraskierat Tower, a huge hollow column which bears on its cupola a perpetual Stylites watching for conflagrations at every point of the horizon; Souleïman with its Arab elegance, its dome like a steel helmet, — all these stand out blazing with light against a background of inconceivably delicate bluish, pearly, opaline tints, and form a picture that seems to be a mirage of the Fata Morgana rather than a prosaic reality. These splendours are reflected in the trembling mirror of the silvery waters of the Golden Horn, which add to the wondrousness of the spectacle. Ships at anchor, Turkish vessels furling their sails, opened like birds' wings, serve by their vigorous tones and the small black lines of their rigging to set off the background of vapour through which shows in dream colours the city of Constantine and of Mohammed II.

I am aware, thanks to friends who visited Constantinople before I did, that these marvels, like stage setting, need light and perspective; as you draw near, the charm vanishes, the palaces turn out to be only rotten barracks, the minarets great whitewashed pillars, the streets narrow, steep, filthy, and characterless; but no

matter, if the incoherent collection of houses, mosques, and trees, coloured by the palette of the sun, produces an admirable effect between land and sky. The prospect, though it be the result of an illusion, is none the less absolutely beautiful.

I retraced my way and ascended to the Little Field of the Dead to reach Pera again. I turned off to the right, which brought me, by following the old Genoese walls, — at the foot of which is a dry moat half filled with filth in which dogs sleep and children play, — to the Galata Tower, a high building which is seen from afar off at sea, and which, like the Seraskierat Tower, has at its top a sentry watching for fires. It is a genuine Gothic donjon, crowned with battlements and topped by a pointed roof of copper oxidized by time, which, instead of a crescent, might well bear the swallow-tailed vane of a feudal manor. At the foot of the tower is a mass of low houses or huts which give an idea of its very great height. It was built by the Genoese. Those soldier merchants turned their warehouses into fortresses, and crenellated their quarter like a fortified city ; their trading-places might have sustained a siege, and did sustain more than one.

CONSTANTINOPLE

A NIGHT IN RAMAZAN

IN Paris the idea of going for a walk between eight and eleven at night in Père-Lachaise or the cemetery at Montmartre would strike one as ultra-singular and cadaverously Romanticist; it would make the boldest dandies quail, and as for the ladies, the mere suggestion of such a party of pleasure would make them faint with terror. At Constantinople no one thinks twice about it. The fashionable walk of Pera is situated on the crest of the hill on which lies the Little Field. A frail railing, broken down in several places, forms between the Field of Death and the lively promenade a line of demarcation which is crossed constantly. A row of chairs and tables, at which are seated people drinking coffee, sherbet, or water, runs from one end to the other of the terrace, that forms an elbow farther on and joins the Great Field behind Upper Pera. Ugly houses of five, six, or seven stories in a hideous order of architecture unknown to Vignola, border the road on one side, and

enjoy a prospect of which they are utterly unworthy. They exhibit the most civilised and modern hideousness, and yet I am bound to say that at night, when they are faintly lighted by the reflection of the lights and the sparkling of the stars or the violet beams of the moon which shimmer on their painted façades, they assume, owing to their very mass, an imposing aspect.

At either end of the terrace there is a café concert, where one can enjoy with one's refreshments the pleasure of hearing an open-air orchestra of gipsies performing German waltzes, or overtures to Italian operas.

This tomb-bordered promenade is uncommonly gay. The incessant music — for one orchestra starts up when another stops — imparts a festive air to the daily meeting of idlers, whose soft chatter forms a sort of bass to the brass phrases of Verdi. The smoke of *latakieh* and *tombeki* ascends in perfumed spirals from the chibouques, the narghilehs and cigarettes, for everybody, even women, smokes in Constantinople. Lighted pipes fill the darkness with brilliant dots and look like swarms of fireflies. The summons "A light!" is heard in every possible idiom, and the waiters hurry in answer to these polyglot calls, brandishing a red-hot coal at the end of a small pair of pincers.

The families living in Pera advance in numerous clans along the space left free by the seated customers. They are dressed in European fashion, save for some slight modifications in the head-dress and the attire of the ladies. The East shows in this place only when some Greek goes by, throwing back the sleeves of his embroidered jacket and swinging his white fustanella outspread like a bell, or some Turkish functionary on horseback, followed by his khavass and his pipe-bearer, returning from the Great Field and going back to Constantinople by way of the Galata Bridge.

Turkish manners have influenced European ones, and the women in Pera live very much shut up. This seclusion is entirely voluntary, of course. They scarcely go out, save to take a turn around the Little Field to breathe the evening air. There are many, however, who do not allow themselves this innocent distraction, and thus the tourist has not the opportunity of reviewing the feminine types of the country as at the Cascine, the Prado, Hyde Park, or the Champs-Élysées. Man alone seems to exist in the East; woman becomes a sort of myth, and Christians in this respect share the views of Mussulmans.

On that particular evening the Little Field of the Dead was very animated. Ramazan had begun with the new moon, the appearance of which above the top of Bithynian Olympus is watched by pious astrologers and proclaimed throughout the Empire, for it announces the return of the great Mohammedan Jubilee. Ramazan, as every one knows, is half Lent, half carnival; the day is given up to austerity, the night to pleasure; penance is accompanied by debauch as a legitimate compensation. From sunrise to sunset, the exact time being marked by a cannon-shot, it is forbidden by the Koran to take any food, however light. Even smoking is forbidden, and that is the most painful of privations for a people whose lips are scarcely ever taken away from the amber mouthpiece. To quench the most burning thirst with a drop of water would be a sin, and would rob fasting of its merit. But from evening to morning everything is permissible, and the privations of the day are amply compensated for; the Turkish city then gives itself up to feasting.

From the promenade of the Little Field I enjoyed a most marvellous spectacle. On the other side of the Golden Horn Constantinople sparkled like the carbuncle crown of an Eastern emperor. The minarets of the

mosques bore upon each of their galleries girdles of lights, and from one to the other ran, in letters of fire, verses of the Koran inscribed upon the azure of the sky as on the pages of a divine book. Saint Sophia, Sultan Achmet, Yeni Valideh Djami, Souleïman, and all the temples of Allah which rise from the Seraï Burnou to the hills of Eyoub were dazzling with light, and proclaimed with a blaze of exclamations the formula of Islam. The crescent moon, accompanied by a star, seemed to embroider the blazon of the empire on the celestial standard. The waters of the gulf multiplied and broke the reflections of the millions of lights, and their waves seemed to be formed of half-melted gems. Fact, it is said, always falls short of fancy, but here the dream was surpassed by the reality. The "Thousand and One Nights" have nothing more fairylike, and the splendours of the outpoured treasures of Haroun al Raschid would pale by the side of this casket which flames along a whole league.

During Ramazan the most complete freedom is enjoyed. The carrying of lanterns is not obligatory as at other seasons. The streets, brilliantly lighted, render this precaution needless. Giaours may remain in

Constantinople until the last lights have been extinguished, a piece of boldness rather dangerous at any other time. I therefore accepted eagerly the proposal of a young gentleman of Constantinople, to whom I had a letter of introduction, to go down to the Top Khaneh landing, hire a caïque, go to see the Sultan pray at Tcheragan, and finish the evening in the Turkish city.

As we descended, the crowd increased and became dense; the shops, brilliantly lighted, illumined the way, invaded by Turks crouching on the ground or squatting upon low stools, smoking with all the voluptuousness due to a day's abstinence. People were coming and going, forming a perpetually animated and most picturesque swarming; for between these two banks of motionless smokers flowed a stream of foot-passengers of every nation, sex, and age. Carried by the stream, we reached the square at Top Khaneh, traversed the arcaded court of the mosque which forms the corner on this side, and found ourselves opposite that charming fountain which English engravings have made familiar to every one, and which has been stripped of its pretty Chinese roof, replaced at present by an ignoble balustrade of cast iron.

A NIGHT IN RAMAZAN

A masked ball cannot offer a greater variety of costumes than Top Khaneh Square on a night in Ramazan. Bulgarians, in their coarse smocks and fur-trimmed caps; slender-waisted Circassians, their broad chests covered with cartridges which make them resemble organ fronts; Georgians, in short tunics belted with metal girdles, and Russian caps of varnished leather; Arnauts, wearing sleeveless, embroidered jackets over their bare torsos; Jews, known by their gowns split down the side and their black caps bound with a black handkerehief; the Island Greeks, with their full trousers, their tightly drawn sashes, and their fez with silk tassel; the Reformed Turks, in frock coats and red fez; the Old Turks, wearing huge turbans, and rose-coloured, jonquil, cinnamon or sky-blue caftans, recalling the fashions of the days of the Janissaries; Persians, in tall black astrakhan-lamb caps; Syrians, easily known by their gold striped kerchief and their white *mach'las*, cut like Byzantine dalmatics; Turkish women, draped in white yashmaks and light-coloured ferradjehs; Armenians, less carefully veiled, wearing violet and black shoes, — form, in groups which constantly draw together and fall apart, the most amazing carnival imaginable.

Open-air stalls for the sale of *yaourt* (curdled milk), *kaimak* (boiled milk), confectioners' shops, — for the Turks are very fond of sweets, — water-sellers' stalls, the little chimes of bells or capsules of crystals struck by hydraulic means, drinking-places where one can get sherbets, granites, or snow water, border the sides of the square and brighten it with their illumination. The tobacconists' shops, brilliantly lighted, are filled with high personages who watch the festival while smoking first-class tobacco in cherry or jasmine pipes with enormous mouthpieces. Within the cafés the tarbouka roars, the tambourine clatters, the rebeb shrieks, and the reed flute miaouls; monotonous nasal songs, interrupted from time to time by shrill cries and calls like the Tyrolese *jödels*, rise from the clouds of smoke. We had the greatest difficulty in reaching, through the crowd, which would not make way, the landing-place at Top Khaneh, where we were to get a caïque.

A few strokes of the oars took us well out, and we could see from the centre of the Bosphorus the illuminations of the mosque of Sultan Mahmoud and of the cannon foundry near it, which has given its name to the landing-place: "Top" in Turkish means cannon; "Khaneh," place or storehouse. The minarets of the

mosque of Sultan Mahmoud are said to be the most elegant in Constantinople and are cited as classical types of Turkish architecture. They rose slender in the blue atmosphere of night, outlined by fire and connected by verses of the Koran, producing the most graceful of effects. In front of the cannon foundry the illuminations were in the shape of a giant cannon with its carriage and wheels, a flaming blazon of Turkish artillery pretty accurately symbolised by this artless design.

We proceeded down the Bosphorus, keeping close to the European shore, which was blazing with light and bordered by the summer palaces of viziers and pachas, each distinguished by set pieces mounted upon iron frameworks and representing complicated monograms after the Oriental fashion, streamers, bouquets, flower-pots, verses from the Koran; and we came opposite the palace, Tcheragan Seraï, which is composed of a main building with a pediment and slender columns, something like the Hall of the Chamber of Deputies in Paris, and two wings with trellised windows, making them look like two great cages. The name of the Sultan, written in letters of fire, blazed upon the façade, and through the open door we could see a large hall, where, amid the dazzling light of the

candelabra, moved a number of opaque shadows, a prey to pious convulsions. It was the Padisha praying, surrounded by his court officers kneeling on carpets. A sound of nasal psalm-singing escaped from the hall along with the yellow reflections of the tapers, and spread out in the calm, blue night.

After looking on for a few moments, we signed to the *caïdgi* to return, and I was enabled to look at the other shore, the shore of Asia, on which rose Scutari, the old Chrysopolis, with its illuminated mosques, and its cypress curtains dropping behind it the folds of their funereal leaves.

During the trip I had the opportunity of admiring the skill with which the rowers of these frail craft steer their way through the riot of boats and currents which would make travelling on the Bosphorus extremely dangerous for less skilful watermen. The caïques have no rudder, and the rowers, unlike the Venetian gondoliers, who face the prow of the gondola, turn their backs to the place to which they are bound, so that with every stroke they look around to see if some unexpected obstacle is in their way. They have also conventional calls by which they warn and avoid each other with uncommon quickness.

Seated on a pillow at the bottom of the caïque by my companion's side, I enjoyed silently and in the most absolute immobility this wonderful spectacle. The least movement is sufficient to capsize the narrow craft, which is built for Turkish gravity. The night dew fell in pearls upon our coats and sputtered in the latakieh of our chibouques; for warm as the days are, the nights are cool on the Bosphorus, which is always swept by the sea-breeze and the columns of air displaced by the currents.

We entered the Golden Horn, and shaving Seraglio Point, we landed amid the flotilla of caïques, among which ours, after having turned around, pushed in like a wedge near a great kiosk with Chinese roof and walls hung with green cloth. It was the Sultan's pleasure-house, now abandoned and used as a guard-room. It was pleasant to watch the landing of the long boats, with gilded prows, of the pachas and high personages awaited on the quay by handsome Barbary horses splendidly equipped and held by negroes or khavasses. The crowd respectfully drew aside to make room for them.

Usually the streets of Constantinople are not lighted, and every one is bound to carry a lantern in his hand

as if he were looking for a man; but during the Ramazan nothing can be more joyously luminous than the ordinarily sombre lanes and squares, along which sparkles here and there a star in a paper. The shops, which remain open all night, are ablaze, and cast great trains of light, brightly reflected by the houses opposite. At every stall there are lamps, tapers, and night-lights swimming in oil; the eating-houses, in which mutton cut in small pieces (*kabobs*) is grilling upon perpendicular spits, are illumined by the brilliant reflections of the coals; the ovens, where cook the *baklava* cakes, open their red mouths; the open-air merchants surround themselves with small tapers to attract attention and to show off their goods; groups of friends sup together around three-branched lamps, the flame of which trembles in the air, or else that of a big lantern striped with many brilliant colours; the smokers, seated at the doors of the cafés, revive with each puff the red spark of their chibouque or of their narghileh, and over the good-tempered crowd falls the splendour of light, splashing in quaintly picturesque reflections.

Everybody was eating with an appetite sharpened by sixteen hours' fast: some, balls of rice and hashed

meat served in vine leaves; others, kabobs rolled in a sort of pancake; others again, ears of boiled or roasted green corn; still others, huge cucumbers or Smyrna *carpous*, with their green skin and their white flesh; a few, richer or more sensual, were helped to large shares of baklava or gorged themselves with sweets with an infantine avidity laughable in tall fellows bearded like the pard; others regaled themselves more frugally on white mulberries, which were to be seen heaped up in quantities in the fruiterers' stalls.

My friend made me enter one of the confectioners' shops to initiate me into the delights of Turkish gormandism, far more refined than people think it in Paris. The shop deserves a separate description. The shutters, drawn up like fans, like the ports of a ship, formed a sort of carved awning quadrilled and painted yellow and blue, above great glass vases filled with red and white sweets, stalactites of *rahat lakhoum*, — a sort of transparent paste made with the best of flour and sugar and then coloured in various ways, — pots of preserves of roses, and bowls of pistachios.

We entered the shop, which, though three people would have found it difficult to move about in it, is one of the largest in Constantinople. The master, a stout,

dark-complexioned Turk, with a black beard and a good-humouredly fierce expression, served us, with an amiably terrible air, rose and white rahat lakhoum and all sorts of exotic sweets highly perfumed and very exquisite, though somewhat too honeyed for a Parisian palate. A cup of excellent mocha relieved by its salutary bitterness the cloying sweets, of which I had partaken too lavishly through love for local colour. At the back of the shop young boys, with print aprons around their waists, were moving upon the bright fire the copper basins in which the almonds and pistachios were being rolled in sugar, or were dusting sugar upon rolls of rahat lakhoum, making no mystery of their preparations. Seated upon low stools, which with divans form the only seats known to Turks, we watched the compact, multi-coloured crowd pass down the street, broken here and there by sherbet sellers, vendors of ice water and of cakes, and through which a functionary on horseback, preceded by his khavass and followed by his pipe-bearer, imperturbably made his way without a single cry of warning, or else a *talika*, abominably jolted by the ruts and the rocks, and led by a coachman on foot. I could not look long enough on a picture so new to me, and it was past one o'clock in the morning

when, guided by my companion, I started for the landing where our boat was waiting for us.

On our way we traversed the Court of Yeni Valideh Djami, which is surrounded by a gallery of antique columns surmounted by Arab arches in a superb style, whitened by the moon's silvery rays and bathed in bluish shadows. Under the arcades lay, in the perfect contentment of people who are at home, numerous groups of rascals rolled up in their rags. Any Mussulman who has no home may, without fear of the watch, stretch himself out on the steps of the mosques, and sleep there as safely as a Spanish mendicant under a church porch.

CONSTANTINOPLE

CAFÉS

THE Turkish café on the Boulevard du Temple has given Parisians a false idea of the luxury of the Oriental cafés. Constantinople is very far from indulging in such wealth of horse-shoe arches, slender columns, mirrors, and ostrich-eggs. Nothing can be plainer than a Turkish café in Turkey. I shall describe one considered to be one of the finest, yet in no wise recalling the luxuries of Oriental fairyland.

Imagine a room about twelve feet square, vaulted and whitewashed, surrounded with a breast-high wainscotting and a divan covered with straw matting. In the centre is the most elegantly Eastern detail, a fountain of white marble with three basins superimposed one above another, which throws into the air a jet of water that falls splashing down. In one corner blazes a brazier on which coffee is made, cup by cup, in little coffee-pots of brass, just as consumers call for it. On the walls are shelves laden with razors and hung with

pretty mother-of-pearl mirrors in the shape of screens, in which customers look to see if they have been shaved as they wished, for in Turkey every café is also a barber's shop.

People believe, because the Koran forbids it, that the Turks absolutely proscribe images, and look upon the products of the plastic arts as idolatrous. That is true in theory, but the practice is far less rigorous, and the cafés are adorned with amazing selections of all sorts of engravings in the most extraordinary taste, which do not appear to scandalise Moslem orthodoxy in the smallest degree.

It is a real pleasure to drink, in one of these cafés, one of the small cups of coffee, which a young rascal with great black eyes brings you on the tips of his fingers in a big egg cup of silver filigree or brass open-work, after you have been rambling through the tiring streets of Constantinople. It is more refreshing than all iced drinks. With the cup of coffee is brought a glass of water which Turks drink first and Franks afterwards. Every one brings his own tobacco in a pouch; the café furnishes only chibouques, the amber mouthpiece of which cannot be infected, and narghilehs, the latter a somewhat complicated apparatus which it would be difficult to carry around.

Although in Turkey any ragged rascal may sit down on the divan of a café by the side of the most splendidly dressed Turk without the latter drawing away to avoid touching with his gold-embroidered sleeve the greasy, torn rags, nevertheless, certain classes have their customary resorts, and the Marble Fountain Café, situated between Seraï Burnou and the mosque of Yeni Valideh Djami, in one of the finest quarters of Constantinople, is frequented by the best people in the city. A charming and absolutely Eastern detail imparts much poetry to this café so far as Europeans are concerned. Swallows have built their nests in the ceiling, and as the café is always open, they enter and go out on their fleet wings, uttering joyous little cries and bringing food to their young without being in the least disturbed by the smoke of the pipes and the presence of customers, whose fez or turbans they sometimes touch with their brown wings. The young swallows, their heads sticking out of the openings in the nests, quietly look, with eyes that are just like little black beads, at the customers coming and going, and fall asleep to the snoring of the water in the bowls of the narghilehs.

The café of Beschik Basch, on the European shore of the Bosphorus, is a remarkably picturesque building.

It resembles the cabins supported on piles from which fishermen watch the passage of schools of fish. Shaded by clumps of trees and built of trellis on piles, it is bathed by the rapid current that laves the quay of Arnaoutkeui, and refreshed by the breezes of the Black Sea; looked at from seaward, it produces a graceful effect with its lights, the reflection of which streams over the water. A continuous tumult of caïques seeking to land enlivens the approach of this aerial café, that recalls, though it is more elegant, the cafés bordering the Gulf of Smyrna.

In closing this monograph of the cafés at Constantinople, let me mention another situated near the Yeni Valideh Djami landing, and frequented by sailors only. It is lighted in rather original fashion, by glasses filled with oil in which burns a wick, and that hang from the ceiling by twisted wires like the springs in toy guns. The *cavadji* (master of the café) from time to time touches the glasses, which through the tension of the spring, rise and fall, performing a sort of pyrotechnical ballet, to the great delight of the customers, who are dressed in such a way that they need not fear oil stains. A chandelier formed of a brass body representing a vessel outlined by a quantity of lights, completes this

curious illumination. The delicate allusion is easily understood by the customers of the café.

On seeing a Frank enter, the cavadji gave in his honour such a mad impetus to the luminary, that the glasses began to dance like will-o'-the-wisps, while the nautical chandelier, pitching and rolling like a ship in a seaway, scattered a heavy shower of rancid oil.

To depict the physiognomy of the customers of this place, I should need Raffet's pencil or Decamps' brush. There were fellows with formidable moustaches, with noses spotted with violent tones, with complexions like Havana cigars or red brick, great Eastern white and black eyes, temples shaven and blue, who had a most ferocious look and an extraordinary vigour of features; heads never forgotten once seen, and which eclipse the wildest work of the most truculent masters.

Let me note also a rather remarkable café situated near the Old Bridge at Oun Capan on the Golden Horn, and frequented chiefly by Phanariote Greeks. It is reached by boat, and while smoking your pipe, you can enjoy the prospect of the shipping going and coming, and the evolutions of the gulls that skim over the waters, and the hawks that soar in great circles in the blue sky.

Such are, with a few variations, the types of Turkish cafés, which are scarcely like the French idea of them. I was not, however, surprised, for I had been prepared for them by the Algerian cafés, which are still more primitive, if that be possible.

CONSTANTINOPLE

THE SHOPS

AN Oriental shop is very different from a European one. It is a sort of alcove cut out of the wall, and closed at night with shutters that are let down like the ports of a ship. The dealer, sitting cross-legged upon a bit of matting or Smyrna carpet, idly smokes his chibouque, or counts with careless fingers the beads of his chaplet, with an impassible, indifferent look, preserving the same attitude for hours at a time, and apparently caring very little whether he has a customer or not. Purchasers generally stand outside in the street and examine the goods heaped up on the stall without the smallest attempt on the owner's part to set these off to advantage. The art of dressing windows, carried to such a high degree in France, is wholly unknown or disdained in Turkey.

Smoking is one of the most pressing needs of a Turk, consequently tobacconists' shops abound. The tobacco, which is cut very fine in long, silky, golden masses, is arranged in heaps upon the stalls according

to price and quality. There are four principal sorts: *iavach* (mild), *orta* (medium), *dokan akleu* (strong), *sert* (very strong), and it is sold at from eighteen to twenty piastres an *ocque*, according to the brand, an *ocque* being equivalent to two and a half pounds. This tobacco, graded in strength, is smoked in chibouques or rolled in cigarettes, which are beginning to be common in Turkey. The most highly prized tobacco comes from Macedonia.

Tombeki, a tobacco intended for the narghileh exclusively, comes from Persia. It is not cut, like the other, but rubbed and broken into small bits. It is darker in colour, and so strong that it cannot be smoked until it has been washed two or three times. As it would scatter easily, it is kept in glass jars like apothecaries' drugs. Without tombeki one cannot smoke a narghileh, and it is to be regretted that it is very difficult to obtain it in France; for nothing is more favourable to poetic reverie than to puff, while lying on a divan, this odorous smoke refreshed by the water it has passed through, and reaching you after travelling through the tube of red or green morocco that you wrap around your arm as a snake charmer in Cairo wraps serpents. It is the very sybaritism of smoking

carried to its highest degree of perfection. Art contributes also to this delicate enjoyment. There are narghilehs of gold, silver, or steel admirably wrought and damascened, with niello work, engraved in marvellous fashion and as elegant in shape as the finest antique vases. They are often adorned with capricious arabesques formed of garnets, turquoises, corals, and other precious stones. You smoke in masterpieces tobacco metamorphosed into perfume.

The Constantinople tobacco dealers are called *tutungis*. They are mostly Greeks and Armenians. The Greeks come from Janina, Larissa, and Salonica; the Armenians from Samsoun, Trebizond, and Erzeroum.

In modern Byzantium the greatest care, and often the greatest luxury is lavished on everything that concerns the pipe, the Turks' favourite pleasure. The shops of the dealers in pipe-stems, bowls, and mouthpieces, are very handsome and very well-stocked. The most highly prized stems are made of cherry or jasmine, and very high prices are paid for them, according to their size and perfection. A handsome cherry stem with the bark intact, shining with the sombre brilliancy of garnet satin, or a jasmine stem, with uniform callosities and of a pretty blond tint, is

worth fully five hundred piastres. I used to stand quite a long time before the shop of a dealer in pipe-stems in the street which leads down to Top Khaneh, opposite the walled cemetery through the grated openings of which one catches sight of rich tombs striped with gold and azure. The dealer was an old fellow with a scanty gray beard, the skin wrinkled around his eyes, his nose hooked, looking like a parrot that has been plucked and forming unconsciously an excellent Turkish caricature that Cham would have delighted in. From the sleeve-holes of his vest with its worn buttons emerged a thin, yellow, lean arm that drove a bow like a violinist performing on the fourth string a difficult passage like Paganini. On an iron point spun around by this bow turned with dazzling rapidity a tube of cherry wood undergoing the delicate operation of boring, and which the old dealer tapped from time to time on the edge of his stall to drive out the dust. Near the old man worked a young lad, his son no doubt, who was practising on less costly stems. A family of kittens played nonchalantly in the sun and rolled around in the fine sawdust. The unbored and the finished stems were ranged at the back of the stall, sunk in shadow, and the whole thing formed a pretty

Eastern *genre* picture, which, with a few variations, is to be seen at every street corner.

The places where *lulehs* (pipe-bowls) are manufactured, are easily known by the reddish dust that covers them. An infinite number of yellow clay bowls, which firing will turn to a rosy red, await, ranged in order upon planks, the moment of being put into the oven. These bowls, of a very fine, soft clay, upon which the potter imprints different ornaments by means of a wheel, do not colour like French pipes, and are sold very cheap. Incredible quantities of them are used.

As for the amber mouthpieces, they form a special business which is almost the equal of the jewellery business as regards the value of the stock and of the labour. At Constantinople, where amber is very dear, the Turks prefer the pale, semi-opaque citron shade, and insist on there being neither spot, flaw, nor veins; and as this is a rare combination, the price of mouthpieces is consequently very high. A pair of mouthpieces has brought as much as eight or ten thousand piastres, and a set of pipes worth one hundred and fifty thousand francs is by no means rare in the homes of the high dignitaries and rich men of Stamboul. These valuable mouthpieces are encircled with rings

of enamelled gold, sometimes enriched with diamonds, rubies, and other gems. It is an Oriental way of displaying wealth, just as we use silver plate and Boulle furniture. All these bits of amber, differing in tone and transparency, polished, turned, bored with extreme care, assume in the sunlight warm, golden tints that would make Titian jealous and inspire the most fanatical opponent of tobacco with a desire to smoke. In humbler shops are to be found less expensive mouthpieces that have some imperceptible flaw, but which fulfil their purpose equally well and are just as sweet to the tongue. There are also imitations of amber in coloured Bohemian glass which are sold largely and which cost very little, but these imitation mouthpieces are used only by the Greeks and the Arnaouts of the lowest class. Of any Turk who respects himself may be spoken the line in "Namouna," slightly modified, —

"Happy *Turk!* He smokes *orta* in amber."

In the street running along the Golden Horn between the New and the Old Bridge are the marble yards where are cut the turban-topped posts that bristle, like white phantoms emerging from their tombs, in the numerous cemeteries of Constantinople. There is a

continual din of mallets and hammers; a cloud of brilliant, micaceous dust covers with unmelting snow the whole of the roadway; painters, surrounded by pots of green, red, and blue, colour the backgrounds on which are to be inscribed in gilded letters the name of the dead, accompanied by a verse of the Koran, or ornaments such as flowers, vine stems, and grapes, used more particularly, as emblematic of grace, gentleness, and fecundity, to adorn the tombs of women. There also are carved the marble basins of fountains intended to cool courts, apartments, and kiosks, or to serve in the frequent ablutions called for by the Mussulman law, which has raised cleanliness to the rank of a virtue, differing in this respect from Catholicism, in which dirt has been sanctified, so that for a long time in Spain people who bathed frequently were suspected of being heretics and considered Moors rather than Christians.

One thing that strikes the stranger in Constantinople is the absence of women from the shops. Mussulman jealousy does not allow of the relations which commerce involves, so it has carefully kept from business a sex in which it trusts very little. Many of the smaller household duties which are with us relegated to women are carried out in Turkey by athletic fellows

with mighty biceps, curly beards, and great bull necks, a practice that, rightly enough, appears ridiculous to us.

On the other hand, if women do not sell, they buy. They are to be seen standing in the shops in groups of two or three, followed by their negresses, who carry an open bag, and to whom they pass their purchases just as Judith passed the head of Holofernes to her black maid. Bargaining appears to delight Turkish women just as much as Europeans. It is as good a way as any to pass the time and to talk with a human being other than the master, and there are few women who will deny themselves that satisfaction, especially among those of the middle class; those of the upper have stuffs and goods brought to their homes.

CONSTANTINOPLE

BAZAARS

BY following the tortuous streets leading to the Yeni Valideh Djami and the mosque of Sultan Bayezid, the Egyptian, or Drug Bazaar, is reached; it is a great market traversed from end to end by a lane intended for the use of purchasers and dealers. A penetrating odor, composed of the aroma of innumerable exotic products, catches and intoxicates you as you enter. Here are exposed in heaps or in open bags henna, sandalwood, antimony, colouring powders, dates, cinnamon, gum Benjamin, pistachios, gray amber, mastic, ginger, nutmegs, opium, hashisch, guarded by cross-legged merchants in attitudes of indifference, who seem benumbed by the heaviness of the atmosphere saturated with perfumes. "These mountains of aromatic drugs," which recall the comparisons of Sir Hasirim, do not attract one long.

Continuing through the deafening hammering of coppersmiths and the sickening exhalations of eating-

houses that exhibit upon their stalls jars full of Turkish preparations — not very appetising to a Parisian stomach — you reach the Grand Bazaar, the outer aspect of which is in no wise imposing, with its high gray walls ornamented by low, wart-like leaden domes and a multitude of hovels and stalls occupied by mean industries.

The Grand Bazaar, to give it the name bestowed upon it by the Franks, covers a vast space of ground, and forms, as it were, a city within a city, with streets, lanes, passages, squares, crossings, and fountains; an inextricable maze in which it is difficult to find one's way even after several visits. The vast space is covered over, and light filters into it through the small cupolas I have just mentioned that dot the flat roof of the edifice. The light is soft, faint, and doubtful, favouring the dealer more than the purchaser. I do not wish to destroy the idea of Oriental magnificence suggested by the name Bezestin of Constantinople, but the Turkish Bazaar is like nothing more than the Temple at Paris, which it resembles also greatly in its arrangement.

I entered through an arcade devoid of architectural pretensions, and found myself in a lane devoted to per-

fumery. Here are sold essences of bergamot and jasmine, flagons of *atar gull* in cases of spangled velvet, rose water, cosmetics, seraglio pastilles marked with Turkish characters, sachets of musk, chaplets of jade, amber, cocoa, ivory, fruit-stones, rose or sandal wood, Persian mirrors framed in with delicate paintings, square combs with large teeth, — in a word, the whole arsenal of Turkish coquetry.

In front of the stalls are numerous groups of women, whose apple-green, rose-mauve, or sky-blue ferradjehs opaque and carefully drawn *yashmaks*, and yellow morocco boots, over which are worn galoshes of the same colour, mark them as thorough-paced Mussulmans. They often hold by the hand handsome children dressed in red or green jackets braided with gold, full Mameluke drawers of cerise, jonquil, or other bright-coloured taffeta, that shine like flowers in the cool, transparent shade. Negresses wrapped in white and blue checkered Cairo *habbarahs* stand behind them and complete the picturesque effect. Sometimes also a black eunuch, recognisable by his short body, his long legs, his beardless, fat, flaccid face sunk between his shoulders, watches with morose look the small company confided to his care, and waves, to make

room for them in the crowd, the *courbach* of hippopotamus leather which is the distinguishing mark of his authority. The dealer, leaning on his elbow, replies phlegmatically to the innumerable questions of the young women, who turn over his goods and upset his stall, asking all sorts of absurd questions, demanding to know the prices and objecting to them with little incredulous bursts of laughter.

Behind the stalls there are back shops, reached by two or three steps, where more precious goods are locked up in coffers or cupboards opened to genuine buyers only. There are to be found the beautiful striped scarfs of Tunis, Persian shawls, the embroidery on which is a perfect imitation of the palms of Cashmere, mirrors of mother-of-pearl, stools incrusted with open-work and intended to support trays of sherbets, reading-desks to hold the Koran, perfume burners in gold or silver filigree, in enamel and engraved copper, small hands of ivory or shell to scratch the back, narghileh bells in Khorassan steel, Chinese and Japanese cups, — in a word, all the curious bric-à-brac of the East.

The chief street in the Bazaar is surmounted with arcades in courses alternately black and white, and the

vaulting is covered with half-effaced arabesques in grisaille in the Turkish rococo taste, which is closer than might be supposed to the style of ornamentation in vogue under Louis XV. It ends in an open place in which rises an ornamented and painted fountain, the water of which is used for ablutions; for the Turks never forget their religious duties, and calmly break off in the middle of a bargain, leaving the purchaser waiting, to kneel upon their carpets, turn towards Mecca, and say their prayers with as much devotion as if they were under the dome of Saint Sophia or Sultan Achmet.

One of the shops most frequented by strangers is that of Lodovico, an Armenian merchant who speaks French and most patiently allows you to turn over his wares. Many a long stay I have made there, enjoying excellent Mocha coffee in small china cups placed in holders of silver filigree in the old Turkish fashion. Rembrandt would have found here the wherewithal to enrich his museum of antiquities: old weapons, old stuffs, quaint goldsmith-work, curious pottery, extraordinary utensils the use of which is unknown. On a little low table are spread out kandjars, yataghans, daggers with sheaths in repoussé silver, scabbards of

velvet, shagreen, Yemen leather, wood, brass, and handles of jade, agate, ivory, studded with garnets, turquoises, coral, long, narrow, broad, curved, waving; — of every shape, of every period, of every country, from the damask blade of the pacha, engraved with verses of the Koran, in letters of gold, to the coarse camel-driver's knife. How many Zebecs and Arnaouts, how many beys and effendis, how many omrahs and rajahs must have stripped their belts to form this precious and quaint arsenal, that would drive Decamps crazy with delight.

On the walls hang, below their helmets, with a scintillation of steel, Circassian coats of mail, gleaming bucklers of tortoise-shell, hippopotamus, or damascened steel, covered with copper bosses; Mongolian quivers, long guns with *niello* work, with incrustations, at once weapons and gems; maces absolutely like those of mediæval knights and which Turkish illustrations never fail to put in the hands of Persians as a distinguishing mark of ridicule.

In the cupboards Broussa silks shimmer like water in the moonlight under their silver overlay; Albanian slippers and tobacco pouches with light golden weft, coloured designs, and lozenges; chemises of fine, *crêpé*

silk with opaque and transparent stripes; neckerchiefs embroidered with spangles; Indian and Persian cashmeres, emir-green pelisses lined with zibelline sable; jackets with braiding more complicated than the arabesques of the Hall of the Ambassadors in the Alhambra; dolmans stiff with gold; brocades sparkling with dazzling gold embroidery; Cairo *machlas*, cut on the pattern of Byzantine dalmatics, — the whole of the fabulous luxury, the chimerical wealth of these countries of the sun, of which we get a glimpse like the mirage of a dream from the depths of our cold Europe.

Amid the chaplets of amber, ebony, coral, sandalwood, with the perfume boxes of enamelled gold, the writing-stands, the coffers and the precious mirrors, the paintings on which represent scenes drawn from the Mahabharata, the fans made of the feathers of peacocks or argus pheasants, the bowls of hookahs chased or inlaid with silver, — amid all these delightful Turkish things are met unexpectedly Sèvres and Dresden porcelains, Vincennes ware, Limoges enamels, which have come heaven knows whence.

Every street in the Bazaar is devoted to some special trade. Here are the dealers in slippers, sandals, and

boots. Most curious are these stalls covered with extravagant foot-gear, turned up at the ends like Chinese roofs, with low heels, of leather, morocco, velvet, brocade, piqué, spangled, braided, and adorned with tufts of down and of floss, and wholly unfitted to European feet. Some are curved and turned up at the ends like Venetian gondolas; others would drive Rhodope and Cinderella to despair by their dainty smallness, and look like jewel-cases rather than possible slippers. Yellow, red, and green disappear under gold and silver quilling. Children's shoes are worked into the most charmingly capricious shapes and ornaments. For street wear women put on the yellow morocco boots which I have already mentioned; for all these lovely marvels, intended for Indian mattings and Persian carpets, would soon stick in the mud of the streets of Constantinople.

Next are the dealers in caftans, *gandouras*, and dressing-gowns of Broussa silk. The costumes are not expensive, although the colours are charming and the tissues extremely soft. These dealers also sell Broussa stuffs, half silk and half thread, for the making of dresses, vests, and trousers in the European fashion, which are very cool, light, and pretty. This is a new industry, fostered by Abdul Medjid.

Then in a special lane come the gold-wire drawers, who manufacture the silver and golden threads with which are embroidered tobacco pouches, slippers, handkerchiefs, vests, dolmans, and jackets. Behind the glass of the show-cases sparkle on their bobbins the brilliant threads which by and by will turn into flowers, foliage, and arabesques. There also are manufactured the cords and the graceful bows so coquettishly complicated, which our people are unable to imitate. The Turks make them by hand, fastening the end of the thread to the toe of the bare foot.

There are jewellers whose gems are enclosed in coffers from which they never take their eyes, or in glass cases placed out of reach of thieves. These obscure shops, very like cobbler's stalls, are full of incredible riches. Vizapoor and Golconda diamonds brought by caravans; rubies of Giamschid, sapphires of Ormuz, — to say nothing of garnets, chrysoberyls, aquamarines, azerodrachs, agates, aventurine, lapis-lazuli, — are piled up in heaps; for the Turks make great use of gems not only for purposes of luxury, but also as a convenient way of carrying money. A diamond, easy to conceal and carry, represents a large sum in a small volume. From the Eastern point of view it is a

safe investment, although it brings in no interest. These gems are generally cut *en cabochon*, for the Orientals cut neither the diamond nor the ruby, either because they are not acquainted with diamond dust, or because they fear to diminish the number of carats by cutting away the angles of the stones. The setting is usually heavy and in Genoese or rococo taste. The delicate, elegant, pure art of the Arabs has left but scanty traces among the Turks. The jewellery consists chiefly of necklaces, earrings, ornaments for the head, stars, flowers, crescents, bracelets, anklets, sword and dagger hilts; but these are seen in all their splendour only in the depths of the harem, on the heads and bosoms of the odalisques, under the eye of the master curled up on a corner of the divan, and all this luxury, so far as the stranger is concerned, is as if it were not.

Although the splendour of the foregoing sentences, constellated with the names of gems, may have made you think of the treasure of Haroun al Raschild and Abul Kassim's cave, you are not to imagine anything dazzling, a mad play of light; for the Turks do not understand the art of showing off gems like Parisian jewellers, and the uncut diamonds, thrown in handfuls into small wooden cups, look like grains of glass. Yet

it would be easy to spend a million in these two-penny shops.

The Arms Bazaar may be considered as the very heart of Islam. None of the modern ideas have crossed its threshold. The Old Turkish party reigns there, gravely seated cross-legged, professing for the dogs of Christians a contempt as deep as in the days of Mohammed II. Time has stayed its steps for these worthy Osmanlis, who, perhaps rightly, regret the janissaries and former barbarities. Here are to be found the great swelling turbans, the fur-edged dolmans, the full Mameluke trousers, the high sashes, and the true classical costume such as it may be seen in the Elbicei Attica collection, in the tragedy of "Bajazet," and in the ceremony of the "Bourgeois Gentilhomme." Here are to be seen faces as impassible as fate, serious, fixed glances, hooked noses over long white beards, brown cheeks tanned by the abuse of vapour baths, robust bodies worn by the voluptuousness of the harem and the ecstasies of opium, — the thorough-bred Turks, in a word, who are slowly disappearing, and who will soon have to be sought for in the very depths of Asia.

At noon the Arms Bazaar coolly closes, and the millionaire merchants withdraw to their kiosks on the

banks of the Bosphorus to watch with angry looks the passing steamboats, diabolical Frankish inventions. The riches contained in this bazaar are incalculable. Here are preserved the damascened blades engraved with Arabic letters with which Sultan Saladin cut down pillows thrown in the air in the presence of Richard Cœur de Lion, who sliced an anvil with his great two-handed sword, and which have as many notches on the back as they have cut off heads, — their bluish steel cuts through breastplates as if they were sheets of paper, their handles are caskets of gems, — old wheel-lock and linstock muskets, marvels of chasing and niello work; battle-axes which perhaps Timour, Ghenghis Khan and Scanderberg used to smash helmets and skulls, — in a word, the whole of the ferocious and picturesque arsenal of antique Islam. Here gleam, sparkle, and shine, under a sunbeam fallen from the high vaulting, saddle-cloths embroidered with silver and gold, studded with suns of gems, moons of diamonds, stars of sapphires; chamfers, bits, and stirrups in silver gilt; fairy-like caparisons which Oriental luxury bestows upon the noble steeds of Nedji, worthy descendants of the Dahis, the Rabras, the Naamahs, and other equine celebrities of the old Islam turf.

It is noteworthy, considering Moslem carelessness, that this bazaar is considered so precious that smoking is not permitted within its precincts. No more need be said, for the fatalist Turk would light his pipe upon a powder magazine.

By way of contrast to this splendour, let me tell you something about the Lice Bazaar. It is the morgue, the charnel house, the abattoir, where end all these glories after they have gone through the diverse phases of decadence. The caftan that shone on the shoulders of a vizier or a pacha ends its career on the back of a hammal or a calfat; the jacket that moulded the opulent charms of a Georgian beauty of the harem here envelopes, soiled and faded, the mummified frame of an old beggar-woman. It is an incredible mass of rags and tatters, in which, where there is not a hole, there is a stain. They hang flaccidly, lugubriously, from rusty nails, with that queer human look peculiar to clothes that have long been worn; they move as the vermin travel over them. Formerly plague nestled in the worn folds of these indescribable garments stained with sanies, and concealed itself there like a black spider in its web in some loathsome corner. The Rastro at Madrid, the Temple at Paris, the former

Alsatia of London, are nothing compared with this Tyburn of Eastern second-hand clothing known by the significant name I have given above. I hope I may be forgiven this itching description in favour of the gems, brocades, and vials of essences of the beginning. Besides, a traveller is like a doctor, he may say anything.

THE WHIRLING DERVISHES

UNLIKE other Mohammedans who forbid Giaours from witnessing the ceremonies of their worship, and drive them with insults from their mosques if they attempt to enter them at the hours of prayer, the Dervishes allow Europeans to enter their tekiehs, on the sole condition that they shall leave their shoes at the door and enter barefooted or in slippers. They sing their litanies and perform their evolutions without being in the slightest degree troubled by the presence of dogs of Christians. It even looks as if they were pleased to have spectators.

The tekieh at Pera is situated on a square covered with tombs, turban-topped marble posts, and edged with cypresses, a sort of annex to the Little Field of the Dead. The hall in which the religious waltzes of the whirlers are performed is at the back of the court. Its interior reminds one both of a dancing-hall and of a theatre. It has a perfectly smooth, carefully waxed floor surrounded by a circular balustrade breast-high.

Slender columns support a gallery of the same form, with seats for spectators, the Sultan's box, and the tribunes intended for women. This part, which is called the Seraglio, is protected against profane looks by a very close trellis like that seen at the windows of harems. The orchestra is opposite the *mirâhb*, which is adorned with tablets covered with verses of the Koran and cartouches of sultans and viziers who have been benefactors of the tekieh. The whole place is painted white and blue, and is exceedingly clean. It looks more like a class-room arranged for a dancing-master's pupils than the praying-place of a fanatical sect.

After a prolonged wait, the dervishes arrived slowly, two by two. The sheik of the community sat down cross-legged upon a carpet covered with gazelle-skins, in front of the mirâhb, between two acolytes. He was a little old man with a leaden complexion and a weary look, his skin all wrinkles, and his chin bristling with a scanty gray beard. His eyes, which flashed occasionally in his wan face out of great brown circles, alone imparted a look of life to his spectral appearance. The dervishes filed past him, bowing in the Oriental fashion with the marks of the deepest respect, as if he

were a sultan or a saint. It was at once a courtesy, a proof of obedience, and a religious evolution. The movements were slow, rhythmic, hieratic, and the rite having been accomplished, each dervish placed himself opposite the mirâhb.

The head-dress of these Mussulman monks consists of a cap of inch-thick brown or reddish felt, which is most like a flower-pot put on upside down. A white vest and jacket, a great plaited skirt of the same colour, like the Greek fustanella, and tight white trousers coming down to the ankle complete the costume, which has nothing monkish according to our view, but which does not lack a certain elegance. At first I could only get a glimpse of it, for the dervishes wore cloaks or surtouts, blue, purple, cinnamon, or other shade, not forming a part of their uniform, and which they throw off when about to begin whirling, and put on again when they fall breathless, dripping with perspiration, worn out by ecstasy and fatigue.

When they had chanted a good many verses of the Koran, wagged their heads sufficiently, and prostrated themselves enough, the dervishes rose, cast aside their mantles, and began to march in procession around the hall. Each couple passed in front of the sheik, who

was standing, and after having exchanged salutes, he blessed them, a sort of consecration performed with a singular etiquette. The dervish who has last been blessed takes another from the following couple and appears to present him to the *imam*, a ceremony which is repeated from group to group until all have passed.

A remarkable change had already taken place in the faces of the dervishes thus prepared for ecstasy. When they entered they looked gloomy, tired, somnolent, their heads bent under their heavy caps; now their faces lightened, their eyes shone, they drew themselves up, they seemed stronger, the heels of their bare feet smote the floor with nervous trepidation.

To the chanting of the Koran in a nasal, falsetto tone was now added the accompaniment of flutes and tarboukas. The tarboukas marked the time and played the bass; the flutes performed in unison a melody of a high tonality and of infinite sweetness. Motionless in the centre of the hall, the dervishes seemed to intoxicate themselves with the delicately barbaric and melodiously wild music, the original theme of which goes back perhaps to the earliest days of the world. Finally one of them opened his arms, stretched them out horizontally in the attitude of Christ on the cross; then began

to twist slowly, moving his bare feet noiselessly on the floor; his skirt, like a bird preparing to fly, began to lift and flutter, his speed became greater, the soft tissue, raised by the air, spread out in wheel-shape, then in bell-shape, like a whirlwind of whiteness of which the dervish was the centre. To the first was added a second, then a third, till the whole band had finally been drawn into the irresistible whirl.

They spun, arms extended, heads bent on shoulders, eyes half-closed, lips parted, like good swimmers who allow themselves to be carried away on the stream of ecstasy; their movements, regular and undulating, had extraordinary suppleness; neither effort nor fatigue was apparent. The most intrepid German waltzer would have fallen suffocated, but these men continued to spin on themselves as if carried on by their own impulse, just as a top that whirls motionless when it is going round fastest, and seems to sleep to the sound of its own snoring.

There was a score of them, perhaps more, pirouetting in the centre of their skirts outspread like the calyxes of gigantic Javanese flowers, and yet they never touched, never left the orbit of their whirl, never lost the time marked by the tarbouka. The imam walked

about among the groups, sometimes clapping his hands, either by way of indication to the orchestra to quicken or slow the rhythm, or to encourage the whirlers and applaud their pious zeal. His impassible appearance presented a strong contrast to the illuminated, convulsed faces. The cold, wan old man walked like a phantom among these frantic whirlers, as if doubt had struck his withered soul, or as if the intoxication of prayer and the vertigo of sacred incantations had long since ceased to affect him, like opium and haschisch eaters, who are proof against the effects of their drugs, and are obliged to increase the dose until they poison themselves.

The whirling stopped for a moment, the dervishes reformed in couples and two or three times marched in procession around the room. This evolution, performed slowly, gives them time to recover their breath and to recollect themselves. What I had hitherto seen was in a way the prelude of the symphony, the beginning of the poem, the introduction to the waltz.

The tarboukas rumbled a quicker step, the sound of the flutes became livelier, and the dervishes resumed their dance with increased activity. Sometimes a dervish stopped, his fustanella rose and fell for a few

moments, then, no longer supported by the whirling, slowly sank, and the unfolded stuff drooped and resumed its perpendicular folds like those of a Greek drapery of antiquity. Thereupon the whirler threw himself on his knees, his face to the ground, and a serving brother covered him with one of the mantles I have mentioned, just as a jockey throws a blanket over a thorough-bred at the end of his race. The imam approached the dervish, prostrate, sunk in absolute immobility, murmured a few sacramental words, and passed on to another. After a time all had fallen, broken down by ecstasy. Soon they rose again, marched two and two around the hall, and left it in the same order as they had entered.

Dazzled by the giddy spectacle, I went to the door to pick out my shoes from amid the collection of foot-gear, and until night I saw whirling outspread before me great white skirts, and heard in my ears the implacably suave theme of the little flute sounding above the drone of the tarboukas.

THE HOWLING DERVISHES

AFTER seeing the Whirling Dervishes at Pera, one must visit the Howling Dervishes at Scutari.

Their hall is not circular in shape, like that at Pera; it is a parallelogram devoid of architectural beauty. On the bare walls are hung some fifteen huge kettle-drums and a few placards inscribed with verses from the Koran. On the side of the mirâhb above the carpet on which the imam and his acolytes sit, the wall is decorated in a ferocious manner that makes one think of the chamber of a torturer or an inquisitor. There are darts ending in heart-shaped pieces of lead from which hang chains, sharp basting instruments, maces, pincers, nippers, and all kinds of weapons of troublous, barbaric forms, the use of which is incomprehensible but terrifying, and which make you shudder like the apparatus of a surgeon spread out preliminary to an operation. It is with these atrocious tools that the Howling Dervishes flagellate themselves when

they have attained to the highest degree of religious fury, and when cries no longer suffice to express their sacred, orgy-like delirium.

The imam was a tall, bony, dry old man, his face deeply marked and wrinkled. He had a very dignified and majestic look. By his side stood a handsome young fellow with a white turban bound with a cross-band of gold and dressed in an emir-green pelisse such as is worn by the descendants of the Prophet, and by hadjis who have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. His profile, clean, sad, and gentle, was more Arab than Turkish, and his complexion, of a uniform olive tone, seemed to confirm that origin.

Opposite were ranged the dervishes in the regulation attitude, repeating in unison a sort of litany intoned by a big man with the chest of a Hercules, a bull neck, brazen lungs, and a stentorian voice. At each verse they nodded their heads forward and back with the same motion as Chinese figures, a motion which ends by causing a sympathetic vertigo when it is watched for any time.

Sometimes one of the Mussulman spectators, fascinated by the irresistible oscillation, staggered out of his place, joined the dervishes, prostrated himself, and began to swing his head like a bear in a cage.

The song rose higher and higher, the nodding became faster, the faces began to turn livid and the breath to come short and quick; the coryphæus accented the sacred words with increased energy, and I awaited, full of anxiety and terror, the scene which was about to take place.

Some dervishes, wrought up to the proper point, had arisen and continued their leaps at the risk of smashing their heads against the walls and of straining the vertebræ of their necks in their furious noddings. Soon everybody was up. That is the moment when the kettledrums are usually taken down, but it was not done on this occasion, the men being excited enough; besides, on account of the Ramazan fast, it was desired not to work them up overmuch. The dervishes formed a chain, placing their hands on each others' shoulders, and began to justify their name by uttering from their chests a hoarse, prolonged howl, "*Allah hou!*" which seemed to be produced by anything but human voices.

The whole band, now moving together, stepped back a pace, then forward, with a simultaneous dash, and howled in a low, hoarse tone resembling the growling of a menagerie when lions, tigers, panthers, and

hyænas have come to the conclusion that it is past feeding-time.

Then inspiration gradually grew, eyes began to shine like those of wild beasts in a cave, epileptic foam showed at the corners of the lips, faces became decomposed, and shone livid under the perspiration. The whole file bent down and rose up under an invisible breath like ears of corn under a storm wind; and every time, with every rise, the terrible "*Allah hou!*" was repeated with increasing energy. I cannot understand how such howls, kept up for more than an hour, do not burst the framework of the chest and drive the blood from broken vessels. One of the dervishes was swinging his head, flagellated by long, black hair, and uttering from his skeleton breast roars like a tiger, or like a lion, or like the wounded wolf bleeding to death in the snow; cries full of rage and desire, hoarse utterances of unknown voluptuousness, and sometimes sighs of mortal sadness, protestations of the body broken under the grindstone of the soul.

Excited by the feverish ardour of this mad devotee, the whole company, calling up its last remnant of strength, threw itself back in a body and sprang forward like a line of drunken soldiers, and howled the last

"*Allah hou!*" without any relation to known sounds, but such as may have been the bellowing of a mammoth or a mastodon in the colossal reeds of antediluvian marshes. The floor trembled under the rhythmical tramping of the howling band, and the walls seemed ready to fall like the ramparts of Jericho at the sound of the horrible clamour.

The exaltation was now at its highest pitch, the howling went on without any break; a noisome odour like that of a menagerie was given out by the perspiring bodies. Through the dust raised by the feet of those madmen, grimaced convulsively, as through a reddish mist, convulsed, epileptic faces, illumined with white eyes and weird smiles.

The imam stood before the mirâhb, urging on the growing frenzy with gesture and voice. A young lad left the group and drew near the old man; and then I saw the purpose of the terrible irons suspended from the wall. Acolytes took from a nail an exceedingly sharp larding-iron and handed it to the imam, who drove it through both cheeks of the young devotee without the lad exhibiting the least sign of pain. The operation over, the penitent returned to his place and continued his frantic nodding. Horribly strange looked

the spitted head. It was like a practical joke in a pantomime, when Harlequin drives his bat through Pierrot's body; only, in this case the joke was no joke.

Two other fanatics sprang into the centre of the room, bare to the belt. They were handed a couple of the sharp darts ending in leaden hearts and iron chains; brandishing them in each hand, they began to perform a sort of disorderly, violent dagger dance, only with unexpected leaps and galvanic jumps; but instead of avoiding the points of the darts, they dashed furiously upon them in order to wound themselves. Soon they rolled to the ground, exhausted, breathless, covered with blood, sweat, and foam, like horses spurred to death and falling near the finish.

A pretty little girl of seven or eight years of age, as pale as Goethe's "Mignon," who rolled black eyes full of nostalgia, and who had stood near the door during the whole ceremony, walked alone towards the imam. The old man received her in a friendly and paternal manner. The little maid stretched herself out upon a sheepskin on the floor, and the imam, supported by two assistants, his feet in large slippers, stepped on to the small child and stood upon her for a few moments. Then he descended from his living pedestal, and the little girl

rose quite happy. Women brought children of three or four years of age, who were, one after another, laid upon the sheepskin and gently trampled under foot by the imam. Some stood it very well, others shrieked like jays plucked alive. I could see their eyes nearly starting from their heads and their poor little ribs bending under the pressure, which was frightful for them. Their mothers, their eyes brilliant with faith, took them up in their arms and appeased them with caresses. After the children came young fellows, grown men, soldiers, and even a general officer, who underwent the salutary imposition of the feet; for according to the ideas of Mussulmans, the pressure cures all diseases.

On leaving the tekieh, I saw the lad whose cheeks had been spitted by the imam. He had withdrawn the instrument of torture, and two small purple cicatrices, already closed, alone marked where the steel had passed through.

CONSTANTINOPLE

THE CEMETERY AT SCUTARI

I CANNOT understand why Turkish cemeteries do not make me feel sad like Christian cemeteries. A visit to Père-Lachaise makes me dismally melancholy for many days, but I have spent hours at a time in the cemeteries of Pera and Scutari without falling into aught else than a vague, sweet reverie. Is this indifference due to the beauty of the heavens, the brilliancy of the light and the romantic beauty of the site, or to religious prejudices, which act upon us unconsciously and make us despise the burial-places of infidels with whom we are to have nothing to do in the next world? I have not been able to make out the reason clearly, although I have often thought the matter over. Possibly it is due to purely plastic causes. Catholicism has shrouded death in a sombre poetry of terror unknown to paganism and Mohammedanism. It has covered its tombs with lugubrious, cadaverous forms intended to cause terror, while the urns of antiquity are surrounded with joyous *bassi-relievi*

on which graceful genii play amid leaves, and the Mussulman tombstones, diapered with azure and gold, seem, under the shadow of the beautiful trees, to be kiosks of eternal rest rather than the abodes of dead bodies.

Many a time I have traversed the Pera cemetery in the most weird moonlight, at the time when the white funeral columns rose in the shadows like the nuns of Saint Rosalie in the third act of "Robert le Diable," without my heart beating faster; a feat which I should perform in the Montmartre Cemetery only with ineffable horror, a cold sweat breaking out all over me, and nervous starts at the least sound, although I have confronted a hundred times in the course of my travels much more genuine subjects of terror. But in the East death is so familiarly mingled with life that one ceases to be afraid of it. The dead on top of whom one drinks coffee, with whom one smokes a chibouque, cannot possibly turn into spectres. So on leaving the menagerie of the Howling Dervishes, I accepted with pleasure, in order to drive the hideous spectacle from my mind, a proposal to walk over to the Scutari cemetery, the best situated, largest, and most populous in the East.

It consists of a vast cypress wood rising on a hilly slope, traversed by broad walks and bristling with funeral stones over an extent of more than three miles. It is impossible in our Northern countries, where we know cypresses as thin broomsticks only, to imagine the degree of beauty and development reached in warmer latitudes by this tree friendly to tombs, but which in the East awakens no melancholy thoughts and is used to adorn gardens as well as cemeteries.

As the cypress grows old, its trunk becomes divided into rough ribs like the corrugations of Gothic pillars in cathedrals; its worn bark turns a silvery gray, its branches spring out in unexpected fashion, and have curiously deformed elbows, yet without destroying the pyramidal outline and the vertical direction of the foliage, massed sometimes in thick clumps, sometimes in scattered tufts. The tortuous, bare roots grip the ground on the edge of the ridges like the talons of a vulture clutching a prey, and sometimes resemble serpents half disappearing within their holes. The solid, dark foliage does not lose its colour in the hot rays of the sun and is always vigorous enough to show sharply against the intense blue of the sky. There is no tree

at once so majestic, so grave, and so serious. Its apparent uniformity is varied by differences appreciated by the painter, though they in no wise break the general lines. The cypress harmonises admirably with the architecture of Italian villas and its black tops match wonderfully well the white columns of the minarets. Its brown draperies form, on the summits of the hills, a background against which stand out the painted wooden houses of the Turkish villas like shimmering vermilion spots.

Already in Spain, in the Generalife and the Alhambra I had fallen in love with cypresses; my stay at Constantinople merely increased this passion, while satisfying it. The silhouette of two cypresses especially is ineffaceably engraved in my memory, and I cannot hear the name of Granada without seeing them at once rise above the red walls of the ancient palace of the Moorish kings with whom I am certain they are contemporary. With what pleasure I used to perceive them, "black sheaves of foliage heavenward springing," when I returned from my excursions in the Alpujarras in company with Romero the eagle hunter or Lanza the cosario, riding a mule whose harness was covered with ornaments and bells. But let me return to the

cypresses of Scutari, which are worthy of posing to Marilhat, Decamps, and Jadin.

A cypress is planted by the side of each tomb. Every standing tree represents a corpse lying down; and in this soil saturated with human manure, vegetation is very active; every day new graves are dug, and the funeral forest quickly grows in height and extent. The Turks do not have the system of temporary leases of ground which makes the cemeteries of Paris resemble woods cut down at regular times; the economy of death is not so well understood by these worthy barbarians. The dead, poor or rich, once here, stretched out on his last couch, sleeps until the trumpets of the Last Judgment shall awaken him, and the hand of man at least does not disturb him.

By the side of the city of the living the necropolis extends infinitely, constantly recruited by peaceful inhabitants who will never emigrate. The inexhaustible quarries of Marmora furnish every one of these mute citizens with a marble post telling his name and his dwelling, and although a coffin takes very little room and the bodies lie very close to each other, the city of the dead is more extensive than the other. Millions of bodies have been laid there since the conquest

of Byzantium by Mohammed. If time, which destroys everything, even nothingness, did not throw down the tumuli stones and strike off their turbans, and if the dust of years, those invisible grave-diggers, did not slowly cover the débris of the broken tombs, a patient statistician might, by adding up the funeral columns, find out the number of inhabitants of Constantinople from 1453, the date of the fall of the Greek Empire. But for the intervention of nature, which everywhere tends to resume its primitive form, the Turkish Empire would soon be naught but a vast cemetery whence the dead would drive the living.

I first followed the main walk bordered by two vast curtains of sombre green most funereally effective. Marble cutters, quietly squatting down, were carving tombs on the roadside; arabas filled with women were going to Haïdar Pacha; Mussulman courtesans, their eyebrows joined by a line of Indian ink, their reddened cheeks showing through the thin muslin yashmak, were idling along, exciting Turkish Johnnies with lascivious glances and sonorous laughter. I soon quitted the beaten road and my companions to roam among the tombs and study the Oriental aspect of death. I have already stated, in speaking of the Little Field of the

Dead at Pera, that Turkish tombs consist of a sort of marble therm ending in a ball, vaguely recalling a human face, and covered with a turban the folds and form of which denote the rank of the dead. Nowadays the turban has been replaced by a coloured fez; stones adorned with a stalk of lotus, or a vine-stem with leaves and clusters of grapes carved in relief and painted denote women. At the foot of the stone, which varies only in being more or less richly gilded and coloured, usually stretches a slab having in the centre a small basin a few inches deep in which the friends of the dead place flowers and pour milk or perfumes.

There comes a time when the flowers fade and are not renewed; for there is no such thing as eternal grief, and life would be impossible without forgetfulness; rain water replaces the rose water; little birds come to drink the tears of heaven on the spot where fell the tears of the heart; the doves dip their wings in the marble bath, and dry themselves while cooing in the sun on the neighbouring stone, and the dead, deceived, thinks he hears the sigh of one faithful to him. Most fresh, most graceful is the winged life warbling on tombs. Sometimes a turbeh, with Moorish arcades, rises in monumental fashion among the hum-

bler sepultures, and serves as a sepulchral kiosk to a pacha surrounded by his family.

The Turks, who are grave, slow, and majestic in every action of life, never hurry save where death is concerned. The body, as soon as it has undergone the lustral ablutions, is borne to the grave at a run, laid so as to point to Mecca, and quickly covered with a few handfuls of earth. This is due to superstitious ideas. Mussulmans believe that the body suffers so long as it is not restored to the earth whence it has come. The imam questions the dead on the principal articles of faith of the Koran; its silence is taken for assent; the spectators answer "Amen," and the procession scatters, leaving the dead alone with eternity.

Then Monkir and Nekir, the two funeral angels whose turquoise eyes shine in their ebony faces, question him on his virtuous or wicked life, and in accordance with his answers assign the place which his soul is to occupy, either in Hades or Paradise. The Mussulman Hades is merely a Purgatory, for after having expiated his faults by more or less lengthened, more or less atrocious punishments, a true believer ends by enjoying the embraces of the houris and the ineffable sight of Allah.

At the head of the grave is left a sort of hole or conduit leading to the ear of the body, so that it may hear the groans, lamentations, and weepings of the family and friends. This opening, too often enlarged by dogs and jackals, is the window of the sepulchre, the wicket through which this world can look into the other.

Walking about at random, I reached an older portion of the cemetery, consequently one more abandoned. The funeral columns, almost all out of plumb, leaned to the left or the right. Many had fallen, as if weary of having remained standing so long, and considering it was useless to mark a grave long effaced and which no one remembered. The earth, which had sunk through the falling in of the coffins or by being washed away by the rains, preserved less carefully the secrets of the tomb. At almost every step I struck against a jaw-bone, a vertebra, a rib, or a thigh-bone. Through the short, scanty grass shone occasionally, white as ivory, spherical and oblong like an ostrich-egg, a singular protuberance. It was a skull just showing above the ground. In some of the fallen-in graves, pious hands had set in order similar bones that had been cast up; other fragments of skele-

tons rolled like pebbles on the edge of the deserted footpaths.

I was seized with a strange and horrible curiosity: I wanted to look through the holes of which I spoke just now, to surprise the mystery of the tomb, to see death in its own home. I bent over the window opened on nothingness, and easily perceived the human remains. I could see the yellow, livid, grimacing skull, with dislocated jaws and hollow orbits, the lean ribs filled with sand or black humus, on which carelessly rested the bone of the arm. The rest was lost in shadow and earth. The sleeper seemed very quiet, and far from being terrified, as I expected, I was reassured by the sight. It was really nothing more than phosphate of lime that lay there, and the soul having vanished, nature was little by little taking possession of its own elements to form new combinations.

Years ago I thought out "The Comedy of Death" in the cemetery of Père-Lachaise, but I could not have written a single stanza of it in the Scutari cemetery. Under the shadow of these quiet cypresses a human skull did not seem to me in any wise different from a stone, and the peaceful fatalism of the East seized upon me in spite of my Christian terror of death

and my Catholic studies of the sepulchre. None of the dust that I questioned answered; everywhere silence, rest, forgetfulness, and the dreamless sleep in the bosom of Cybele, the holy mother. In vain I listened at every half-opened door; I heard no other noise than that of the worm spinning its web. None of the sleepers lying on their side had turned over, feeling uncomfortable, and I continued on my walk, stepping over the marble tombstones, walking over human débris, calm, serene, almost smiling, and thinking with no great dread of the day when the foot of the passer-by would strike sonorous upon my own empty skull.

Sunbeams, piercing the black pyramids of the cypresses, glittered like will-o'-the-wisps on the white tombs, the doves were cooing, and in the blue heavens the hawks were soaring. A few women, seated on a small carpet in company with a negress or a child, were dreaming in melancholy fashion or resting cradled by the mirage of tender remembrances. The air was delightfully balmy, and I felt life penetrating me at every pore amid this dark forest, the soil of which is made of dust that once was living men.

I had met my friends again, and we were now traversing an entirely modern portion of the cemetery.

There I saw recent tombs surrounded with railings and small flower-beds like those in Père-Lachaise, for death has also its fashions, and in this place were buried in the latest style well-to-do people only. For my part, I prefer the Marmora marble post with carved turban, and the lines of the Koran in gilded letters.

The road through the cemetery issues into a broad plain called Haïdar Pacha, a sort of drill-ground which stretches between Scutari and the vast neighbouring barracks of Kadikeuï. A revetment wall formed of old broken tombs, ran along either side of the road and formed a terrace three or four feet high which offered the gayest of spectacles. It looked like a vast bed of living flowers. Two or three rows of women squatting on mats or carpets, exhibited the varying colour of their ferradjes, — rose, sky-blue, apple-green, lilac, elegantly draped round their forms. In front of these groups the red jackets, the yellow trousers, and brocade vests of the children shimmered in a luminous maze of spangles and gold embroidery.

The ferradje and yashmak at first produce on the traveller the same effect as a domino at the Opera balls. At the outset you can make out nothing; you feel dazzled by these anonymous shadows which whirl

before you, apparently all alike; you can recognise no one. But soon the eye becomes accustomed to the uniformity, notes differences, observes forms under the satin which veils them. Some ill-concealed grace betrays youth, old age is marked by some senile symptom, a propitious or unpropitious breeze lifts up the lace of the mask, the face shows, and the black phantom becomes a woman.

It is the same way in the East. The ample merino drapery, which resembles a dressing-gown or a bath-robe, soon loses its mystery; the yashmak becomes unexpectedly transparent, and in spite of all the garments with which Mussulman jealousy clothes her, a Turkish woman, when you do not absolutely stare at her, soon becomes as visible as a French woman. The ferradje which conceals her form may also reveal it; the folds, purposely drawn tight, will exhibit what they ought to conceal; by opening it under pretext of rearranging it, a Turkish coquette — there are such — sometimes exhibits through the opening of her gold-embroidered, velvet jacket a superb bosom scarcely concealed by a gauze chemise, and marble breasts that owe nothing to the shams of the corset. Those among them who have pretty hands know very

well how to put out their slender fingers tinged with henna from the mantle in which they are wrapped; there are certain ways of making the muslin of the yashmak opaque or transparent by doubling it or using a single fold. This white mask, importunate at first, can be placed higher or lower, the space which separates it from the head-dress may be narrowed or broadened. Between these two white bands shine like black diamonds, like jet stars, the most wonderful eyes in the world, brightened by kohl, and concentrating in themselves the whole expression of the faintly seen face.

Walking slowly in the centre of the road, I was able to review at my leisure this gallery of Turkish beauties, just as I might have inspected a row of boxes at the Opera. My red fez, my buttoned frock-coat, my dark complexion and my beard enabled me to be easily confounded amid the crowd; I did not look too scandalously Parisian.

On the drive at Haïdar Pacha filed gravely by arabas, talikas, and even coupés and broughams filled with very richly dressed ladies, whose diamonds, scarcely deadened by the white mist of muslin, sparkled in the sunshine, like stars behind a light cloud. Khavasses on

horseback and on foot accompanied some of these carriages, in which odalisques of the imperial harem were idly whiling away the weary hours. Here and there groups of five or six women rested in the shade, guarded by a eunuch, close to the araba which had brought them, and seemed to be posing for a picture by Decamps or Diaz. The great gray oxen chewed the cud peacefully and shook, to drive away the flies, tufts of red wool suspended from the curved sticks planted in their yoke and tied to their tails by a string. With their grave looks and their frontlets studded with steel plates, these splendid animals looked like priests of Mithra or Zoroaster.

The vendors of snow water, sherbet, grapes, and cherries passed from one group to another offering their wares to the Greeks and Armenians, and contributed to the animation of the picture. There were also sellers of Smyrna *carpous* cut in slices, and of rosy watermelons. Horsemen riding handsome steeds performed fantasias at a distance from the carriages, no doubt in honour of some invisible beauty. The thorough-breds of Nedji, Hedjaz, and Kourdistan proudly shook their long, silky manes and shone in their housings studded with gems, feeling themselves

admired, and sometimes when a horseman had turned his back, a lovely head would show at the window of a talika.

The sun was setting, and I returned, thoughtful and a prey to vague desires, towards Scutari, where my caïdji was patiently waiting for me between a cup of muddy coffee and a chibouque of latakieh, as he had the right to do, being a Greek and a Christian, not subject to the rigours of Ramazan.

CONSTANTINOPLE

THE SULTAN AT THE MOSQUE

IT is customary for the Padisha to go in state every Friday to a mosque to pray in public. Friday, as every one knows, is to Mussulmans what Sunday is to Christians and Saturday to Jews, a day particularly devoted to religious practices, although it does not involve the idea of obligatory rest.

Every week the Commander of the Faithful visits a different mosque, Saint Sophia, Souleïman, Osmanieh, Sultan Bayezid, Yeni Valideh Djami, the Tulip Mosque, or any other, according to an itinerary settled upon and published beforehand. Besides the fact that prayer in a mosque is obligatory on that day in accordance with the precepts of the Koran, and that the Padisha, as head of the church, cannot avoid it, there is also a political reason for this official practice of piety. The object is to make the people see for themselves that the Sultan is alive; for the whole week he remains shut up within the mysterious solitudes of the Seraglio or the summer palaces scattered on the shores of the

Bosphorus. By traversing the town on horseback, plainly visible to all, he certifies to the people and the foreign ambassadors that he is alive; a precaution which is not needless, for it would be easy, for the sake of palace intrigues to conceal his natural or violent death. Even serious sickness does not interrupt the performance, for Mohammed I, son of Mustapha, died between the two gates of the Seraglio on returning from one of these Friday excursions on which he had gone although he could scarcely keep in his saddle and had to be rouged to conceal his pallor.

I learned by the dragoman of the hotel that the Sultan was to go from the palace of Tcheragan to Medjidieh, situated close by. Medjidieh is connected with the palace, the façade of which looks out upon the Bosphorus, and on that side consists simply of great walls topped by the chimneys of the kitchens. These chimneys are painted green, and are in the shape of columns. The mosque is quite modern, and its architecture, with Genoese rococo volutes and foliage, has nothing noticeable, although its dazzling whiteness makes it stand out well against the dark blue sky.

The door of the mosque was open, and I had a glimpse of the various pachas and high officers, wearing

the tarboush, their breasts blazing with gold, their shoulders set off by big epaulettes. They were performing, in spite of their obesity, the rather complicated pantomimes called for by Oriental prayer. They knelt and rose heavily, with apparently sincere faith, for philosophical ideas have progressed much less in Constantinople than people think. Even Turks brought up in Europe show themselves, on their return from London and Paris, none the less attached to the Koran. It needs but a slight scratching of their varnish of civilisation to come upon the faithful believer.

Black slaves and syces held horses or walked them round. These animals, covered with superb housings, had brought the sultan and his suite. They were very handsome, robust, and solid-looking, although without the muscular elegance of the Arab horse; but they are said to possess remarkable endurance. The light desert steeds would break down under the weight of the heavy Turkish horsemen, who are most of them excessively stout, especially when they have attained to high rank. These horses are all of a particular Barbary breed. The sultan's was easily known by the gems that starred the schabrach, and by the imperial cipher, embroidered in a complicated arabesque at every

corner of the velvet, which almost disappeared under the ornamentation.

Files of soldiers were drawn up along the walls, awaiting the coming out of His Highness. They wore the red tarboush, and their uniform, not unlike the undress uniform of our troops of the line, consisted of a round jacket of blue cloth and trousers of coarse white linen. This costume contrasts curiously with the characteristic, tanned faces, that a Janissary's turban would become a great deal better.

On the floor of the mosque was stretched a rather narrow band of black cashmere for the Sultan to walk upon. It led from the gate over the steps to a marble horse-block, like those seen at the entrances of palaces and near the landing-places of caïques. I think, though I am not certain, that this black carpet is specially reserved for the Sultan as Grand Khan of Tartary.

Genuflections, prostrations, and psalm-singing went on within the sanctuary, and the noonday sun, shortening the shadows, made the paving-stones on the square shine again, while the white walls reflected the blinding light, which was the more unpleasant for the three or four ladies who happened to be there because etiquette forbids opening a parasol in the presence of the Sultan

or even in front of the palaces in which he dwells. In the East the parasol has always been the emblem of supreme power; the master is in the shade, while the slaves roast in the sun.

On this point, as on many others, etiquette has been relaxed, and one would not run any risk nowadays by breaking the rule, but well-bred strangers always conform to it. What is the good of shocking the habits of the country one visits, — habits which are due to some good reason and often are not more ridiculous than our own?

Some commotion was now visible within the mosque; the officers put on their boots at the door, the syces brought the Sultan's horse to the horse-block, and soon, between two files of viziers, pachas, and beys, bowing to him in Oriental fashion, a bow which I greatly prefer for its respectful grace to the European bow, appeared His Highness, Sultan Abul Medjid, standing out in the light against the dark background of the door, the frame of which formed a setting for him. His dress, which was very simple, consisted of a sort of sack coat of dark blue cloth, trousers of white silk, patent-leather boots, and a fez to which the imperial aigrette of heron's plumes was fixed by

a clasp of huge diamonds. Through the opening of his coat showed gold embroidery. I greatly regret, for my part, the former Oriental magnificence. I looked for sultans as impassible as idols in reliquaries of gems, something like peacocks of power, blooming amid an aureole of suns. In despotic countries the sovereign cannot segregate himself too much from humanity by imposing, solemn, and hieratic forms, by a dazzling, chimerical, and fabulous display of luxury. As God to Moses, he ought to appear to his people only in a burning bush of blazing diamonds.

However, in spite of the austere simplicity of his dress, Abdul Medjid's rank was plain to every one. Utter satiety was visible on his pale face; the assurance of irresistible power gave to his features, not very regular, a marmorean tranquillity; his fixed, motionless eyes, piercing, and lacklustre, seeing everything and looking at nothing, did not resemble the eyes of men. A short, somewhat thin brown beard fringed the sad, imperious, and gentle face.

With a few paces taken extremely slowly and rather gliding than walking, the steps of a god or a phantom that does not progress like a man, Abdul Medjid crossed the steps separating the gate of the mosque from the

stirrup-block, walking along the band of black stuff on which no one but he set foot, and rather let himself slide than got on to the saddle of his horse, which was as motionless as if carved out of stone. The stout officers hoisted themselves up with greater difficulty on top of their respective saddles, and the procession started to return to the palace amid cries of "Long live the Sultan!" uttered in Turkish by the soldiers with genuine enthusiasm.

During the defile, the band played a march arranged on Turkish motives by the brother of Donizetti, who is band-master to the Sultan, and with enough kettle-drums and dervishes' flutes to satisfy Mohammedan ears, without, however, shocking Catholic ones. The march has a good deal of dash, and is rather characteristic.

Then every one entered the palace, through the open gate of which I could see the great modern court. The doors were closed, and no one was left in the street but a few sight-seers scattering in different directions, Bulgarian peasants with coarse blouses and fur caps, and old mummified beggar-women squatting in their rags along the burning hot walls.

The noonday silence fell upon the mysterious

palace which, behind its trellised windows, contains so much weariness and languor. I could not help thinking of all the treasures of loveliness lost to human gaze, of all the marvellous beauties of Greece, Circassia, Georgia, India, and Africa that vanish without having been reproduced by marble or on canvas, without art having made them immortal and bequeathed them to the loving admiration of centuries; of the Venuses who will never have a Praxiteles, of the Violantes deprived of a Titian, of the Fornarinas whom no Raphael will see.

CONSTANTINOPLE

WOMEN

THE first question asked of any traveller who returns from the East is, "What about the women?" However much it may hurt my self-love, I must humbly confess that I have nothing to say in the way of love affairs, and I am forced to my great regret to omit from my story any account of amourous and romantic adventures. And yet it would have been so pleasant to vary my tale of cemeteries, tekiehs, mosques, palaces, and kiosks; for nothing better sets off an account of a voyage to the East than an old woman who, at the corner of a deserted lane, signs to you to follow and introduces you by a secret door into an apartment adorned with all the splendour of Asiatic luxury, where you find awaiting you, seated upon brocaded carpets, a sultana covered with gold and gems.

It is true that Turkish women go out freely, repair to the Sweet Waters of Asia and Europe, drive at Haïdar Pacha, on Sultan Bayezid Square, sit on the

mounds in the cemeteries at Pera and Scutari, spend whole days bathing and visiting their friends, go to the play at Kadikeuï, watch the tricks of the jugglers at Psammathia, chat under the arcades of the mosques, stop at the shops in the Bezestan, travel on the Bosphorus in caïques or steamboats; but they have always with them two or three companions, either a negress or an old woman as a duenna, and if they are rich, a eunuch, who is often jealous on his own account; when they are alone, which sometimes happens, a child serves to maintain respect for them; and if they have no child, public custom watches over and protects them, perhaps even more than they desire. The freedom which they enjoy is but apparent.

Strangers have believed they have had love adventures because they have mistaken Armenian for Turkish women, both wearing the same costume save the yellow boots, and the Armenians imitating Turkish manners sufficiently well to deceive a stranger; but in reality Turkish life is hermetically closed, and it is very difficult to know what goes on behind the closely trellised windows in which are cut small holes as in the drop curtain of a theatre, to enable those behind to look out.

Nor is it any use to ask for information from the natives themselves. As Alfred de Musset says at the beginning of "Namouna," —

"The deepest silence in this story reigns."

To speak to a Turk of his wife is the worst of manners; not the faintest allusion must ever be made to the delicate subject. The French minister's wife, desiring to give Reschid Pacha some beautiful Lyons silks for his harem, said to him as she handed them over: "Here are stuffs which you will know best how to use." If she had expressed more clearly the intention of her gift, it would have been a rudeness, even to Reschid, accustomed to French manners, and the exquisite tact of the marchioness made her choose a graciously vague form which could in no wise wound Oriental susceptibilities.

It will easily be understood, when these are the ways of the people, that it would be a great mistake to ask of a Turk information concerning the inner life of the harem and the character and manners of Mussulman women. Even if one has known him familiarly in Paris, even if he has drunk two hundred cups of coffee and smoked as many pipes on the same divan as yourself, he will merely give an evasive answer, get

very angry, and avoid you thereafter. Civilisation, in this respect, has not made the smallest progress. The only way to learn anything is to ask some European lady who has been well recommended and who is received in a harem, to tell you exactly what she has seen. A man must give up all hope of knowing anything more of Turkish beauty than the domino shows or the glimpse he may have caught of it under the awning of an araba, behind the windows of a telika, or under the shade of the cypresses in a cemetery, when heat and solitude suggest that the veil may be slightly drawn aside. Even then, if one draws too near and there happens to be a Turk in the neighbourhood, one is exposed to receive compliments of this sort: "Dog of a Christian! Giaour! May the birds of heaven soil your chin! May the plague dwell in your home! May your wife be barren!" a Biblical and Mussulman curse most seriously spoken. And yet the anger is feigned rather than real, and is principally intended for the gallery. A woman, even a Turkish woman, is never sorry to be looked at, and to keep her beauty secret always annoys her somewhat.

At the Sweet Waters of Asia, by remaining motionless against a tree or leaning against the fountain like

one slumbering and dreaming, I managed to catch a glimpse of more than one lovely profile scarcely concealed by the finest of gauze, of more than one pure bosom white as Parian marble, swelling under the folds of a half-opened ferradje, while the eunuch, reassured by my careless, idle look, was walking about at some distance, or watching the steamers on the Bosphorus.

For the matter of that, the Turks are no better off than the giaours. Even in the houses of their most intimate friends, they never get beyond the *selamlik*, and they are acquainted with their own wives only. When one harem pays a visit to another, the slippers of the visitors placed on the threshold forbid entrance even to the master of the house, who is thus turned out of his own place. An immense feminine population, anonymous and unknown, transformed into a perpetual masked ball, moves in the mysterious city, but the dominoes have not the right to unmask. Fathers and brothers alone have the right to see uncovered the faces of their daughters and sisters, which are veiled in the presence of less close relatives; so a Turk very likely has not seen in the course of his life more than five or six faces of Mussulman women.

Large harems are owned by viziers, pachas, beys, and other wealthy persons only, every woman who becomes a mother having the right to a separate household and slaves of her own. Most Turks are satisfied with one legitimate wife, although they may have as many as four, and also one or two purchased concubines. The remaining members of the sex are to them as phantoms or chimeras. It is true that they can make up for it by looking at the Greek and Armenian women, the Jewesses, the ladies of Pera and the few lady tourists who visit Constantinople.

Let me give a description of a Turkish interior taken down from the account of a lady invited to dinner by the wife of an ex-pacha of Kurdistan. This lady had been in the seraglio before she married the pacha. When they have attained the age of thirty, the Sultan gives their freedom to a number of his slaves, who usually marry very well on account of the relations which they maintain with the palace, and the influence which they are supposed to exert. Besides, they have been very well brought up: they can read, write, rime verses, dance, play on various instruments, and they have the high-bred manners acquired at court. They also possess in a very high degree a knowledge

of intrigues and cabals, and often, through their friends who remain in the harem, learn political secrets, which their husbands turn to account either to obtain a favour, or to avoid being disgraced. To marry a lady of the seraglio is therefore a very wise step on the part of an ambitious or a prudent man.

The room in which the pacha's wife received her guest was elegant and rich, contrasting with the severe nudity of the selamlik. The three outer walls were filled with windows to admit as much air and light as possible. A hothouse gives an accurate idea of these rooms, themselves intended for the keeping of precious flowers. A magnificent, soft Smyrna carpet covered the floor; the walls were decorated with painted and gilded arabesques and knots; a long blue and yellow satin divan ran down two sides of the room; another small and very low divan was placed between two windows from which there was a view of the splendid panorama of the Bosphorus. Squares of blue damask were thrown here and there on the carpet.

In a corner sparkled a great emerald-coloured Bohemian glass ewer with gold ornaments, placed upon a tray of the same material; in the other corner was a

coffer of goffered, ornamented, piqué and gilded leather in the most charming taste. Unfortunately this Oriental luxury was marred by a mahogany chest of drawers, on the marble top of which was placed a clock under a glass shade between two vases of artificial flowers, also under glass shades, exactly as on the mantelpiece of a worthy retired Paris tradesman. These discords, painful to an artist, are met with in every Turkish house with any pretensions to good taste. A room less richly ornamented and opening out of the first was used as a dining-room and led to the service staircase.

The hostess was sumptuously dressed, as all Turkish ladies are at home, especially when they expect a visit. Her black hair, divided into an infinite number of small tresses, fell down her cheeks and over her shoulders. On her head sparkled a sort of diamond helmet formed of the quadruple chains of a rivière of diamonds and of gems of purest water sewn upon a small, sky-blue satin cap, which disappeared almost wholly under the jewels. This splendid head-dress thoroughly became the noble and severe character of her beauty, her brilliant black eyes, her thin, aquiline nose, her red lips, her long oval face; she had the mien of a haughty and kindly lady of rank.

On her somewhat long neck was a necklace of large pearls, and through the opening in her silk chemise showed the upper part of lovely, well shaped breasts which had no support from stays, an instrument of torture unknown in the East. She wore a gown of dark garnet silk open in front like a man's pelisse, and on the sides from the knee down, with a train behind like a court dress. The gown was edged with a white ribbon puffed in rosettes at regular intervals. A Persian shawl fastened round her waist the full white taffeta drawers, the falling folds of which covered small slippers of yellow morocco, of which only the upturned tips could be seen.

She placed the stranger by her on the small divan with much grace, after having, however, offered her a chair to sit in European fashion if the Turkish seat should be inconvenient: and she examined her dress curiously without any marked affectation, as a well-bred person may do when she sees something new. Conversation between people who do not speak the same language and are reduced to pantomime could not be very varied. The Turkish lady asked the European if she had children, and gave her to understand that to her great grief she herself was deprived of that happiness.

When the hour for the repast came, they went into the next room, around which also were divans, and a polished brass table covered with meats was brought in. A favourite slave of the *khanoum* shared the meal by her mistress's side. She was a handsome maid of seventeen or eighteen years of age, robust, lovely, splendidly developed, but greatly inferior in breeding to the exodalisque of the seraglio. She had great black eyes, broad eyebrows, rich red lips, round cheeks, a somewhat rustic glow of health over her face, white, firm arms, large breasts, and a wealth of contours which her loose costume enabled one to perceive freely. She wore a small Greek cap from which her brown hair escaped in two heavy plaits, and was dressed in a jacket of a light pistachio yellow very light and soft in tone, which French dyers have never managed to reproduce. This vest, slashed on the sides and back so as to form basques, had short sleeves from which emerged silk gauze undersleeves. Great full drawers of muslin completed the costume, as simple as it was graceful.

A mulatto woman, the colour of new bronze, with a bit of white drapery twisted around her head, and wrapped carelessly in a white habbarah that brought

out splendidly the dark colour of her skin, stood barefooted by the door taking the dishes from the hands of two servants who brought them from the kitchen, situated on the lower floor.

After dinner the khanoum rose and passed into the drawing-room, where she went from one divan to another, gracefully nonchalant. Then she smoked a cigarette, instead of the traditional narghileh, for cigarettes are now the fashion in the East, and there are as many *papelitos* smoked in Constantinople as in Seville. The Turkish women love to fill up their leisure by rolling the golden latakieh in the thin paper. The master of the house came to pay a visit to his wife and the European lady, but on hearing him coming, the young slave fled in the greatest haste; belonging to the khanoum alone and already engaged, she could not appear with uncovered face before the ex-pacha of Kurdistan, who, for the matter of that, had but one wife, like many Turks.

After a few minutes the pacha withdrew to say his prayers in the next room, and the khanoum called her slave.

The hour of leave-taking had come. The stranger rose to go. The hostess signed to her to remain a

little longer, and whispered a few words to the young slave, who began to rummage in the drawers very energetically, until she found a small object enclosed in a case, which the pacha's wife handed to her visitor as a graceful remembrance of the pleasant evening spent together. The case, which was of lilac cardboard glazed with silver, contained a small crystal vial on which was the following label: "Extract for the handkerchief. Paris. Honey," and on the other side: "Double extract, guaranteed quality of honey. L. T. Piver, 103 Rue Saint-Martin, Paris."

CONSTANTINOPLE

THE BREAKING OF THE FAST

I HAVE several times mentioned the caïque, and one cannot well do otherwise when speaking of Constantinople; but I perceive that I have not described it, though it is worth doing so, for unquestionably the caïque is the most graceful craft that ever furrowed the blue waters of the sea. By its side the elegant Venetian gondola is but a rough box, and gondoliers are wretched louts compared with the caïdjis.

The caïque is a boat fifteen to twenty feet long by three feet beam, cut in the shape of a skate, and double-ended so that it can proceed in either direction. The rail is formed of two long planks carved on the inner side with a frieze of foliage, flowers, fruits, knots of ribbon, quivers, and other ornaments of the kind. Two or three planks, open-worked and forming braces, divide the boat and strengthen the sides against the pressure of the water. The prow is armed with a bronze beak. The craft is built of ash polished or varnished, relieved occasionally with a gold line, and is kept ex-

tremely clean and elegant. The caïdjis, who each pull a pair of sculls larger at the handle by way of counter-weight, sit upon small thwarts covered with a sheep-skin, to prevent slipping as they pull, and their feet rest against wooden stretchers. The passengers seat themselves on the bottom of the boat, at the stern, so as to bring the prow a little out of the water, which makes the boat travel very easily. The boatmen often grease the outside of the boat in order to prevent the water adhering to it. A more or less costly carpet is laid down in the stern sheets of the caïque, and it is necessary to preserve the most complete immobility, for the least abrupt movement would upset the craft, or at all events make the caïdjis hit their hands, for they row overhanded. The caïque is as sensitive as a pair of scales, and heels over if the equilibrium is disturbed even for a moment. The gravity of the Turks, who do not move any more than idols, is admirably suited to this constraint, painful at first to the more spirited giaours, though they soon acquire the habit of it.

A two-sculled caïque can hold four persons seated opposite to each other. In spite of the heat of the sun the boats have no awning, for it would cause windage and would be contrary to Turkish etiquette — awnings

being reserved for the sultan's caïques; but a parasol may be used, provided it be closed when passing near the imperial residences. These boats can keep up with a horse trotting on the bank, and often distance it.

Each boat has on the bow a plate with the name of the landing where it is stationed: Top Khaneh, the Galata, the Green Kiosk, Yeni Valideh Djami, Beschicktasch. The caïdjis, or rowers, are mostly superb Arnaouts or Anatolians, of great manly beauty and of herculean strength. Air and sunshine tanning their skin have given them the colour of the splendid bronze statues of which they already have the form. Their dress consists of full linen drawers, dazzlingly white, a striped gauze shirt with slit sleeves which leave the arms free, and a red fez with a blue or black tassel half a foot long, fitting close to their shaven temples. A woollen girdle, striped red and yellow, is twisted several times around their loins and sets off their busts. They wear a moustache only, in order not to be heated by useless hair. They are bare-legged and bare-footed, and their open shirt shows powerful pectoral muscles tanned to a rich colour. At every stroke their biceps swell and fall like cannon-balls on their athletic arms. The obligatory ablutions

keep these handsome bodies scrupulously clean, and they are made healthy by exercise, open air, and a sobriety unknown to Northern people. The caïdjis, in spite of their hard work, live as a rule on bread, cucumbers, maize, and fruit, drinking nothing but pure water and coffee; and those among them who profess the religion of the prophet will row from morning to evening without smoking or drinking a drop of water during the thirty days of the Ramazan fast. I think I do not exaggerate when I estimate at three or four thousand the number of caïdjis who serve at the different landings of Constantinople and the Bosphorus, as far as Therapia or Buyoukdereh. The situation of the town, separated from its suburbs by the Golden Horn, the Bosphorus, and the Sea of Marmora, renders constant water travel necessary. You have constantly to take a caïque to go from Top Khaneh to Seraglio Point, from Beschicktasch to Scutari, from Psammathia to Kadikeuï, from Kassim Pacha to Phanar, and from one side to the other of the Golden Horn, if you happen to be too far from one of the three bridges of boats that cross the harbour.

It is most amusing, when you reach one of the landings, to see the caïdjis hasten up and fight for your

custom as formerly the stage-coach drivers used to do for travellers, swearing at each other with amazing volubility, and offering to take you at a reduced price. The tumult is increased occasionally by the barking of the frightened dogs which are trampled upon in the heat of the debate. At last, pushed, shoved, elbowed, dragged, you remain the prey of one or two gigantic fellows, who carry you off in triumph towards their boat through the growling groups of their disappointed brethren.

To board a caïque without making it turn bottom up is a rather delicate operation. A good old Turk with a white beard, his complexion burned by the sun, steadies the boat with a stick provided with a bent nail, and you give him a *para* for his services. It is not always easy to get clear of the flotilla crowding around each landing-place, and it takes the incomparable skill of the caïdjis to manage it without collisions and without accident. When landing, every caïque is turned around so as to bring it in stern first, and this manœuvre might involve dangerous collisions if the caïdjis had not, like the Venetian gondoliers, conventional cries of warning. When you land, you leave the price of the trip at the bottom of the boat on

the carpet, in piastres or *beschliks*, according to the trip and the price agreed upon.

The business of the Constantinople caïdjis would be very profitable, but for the competition of the steamboats which are now beginning to travel up and down the Bosphorus as they do on the Thames. From the Bridge of Galata, beyond which they cannot go, there start at every hour of the day numbers of Turkish, English, and Austrian steamers, the smoke of which mingles with the silvery mists of the Golden Horn, and which transport travellers by hundreds to Bebek, Arnaoutkeuï, Anadoli Hissar, Therapia, and Buyukdereh on the European shore; to Scutari, Kadikeuï and the Isles of the Princes on the Asiatic shore. Formerly these trips had to be made in caïques, and cost much time and money on account of their length, being also somewhat perilous because of the violent currents and the wind, which may at any moment freshen up as it blows from the Black Sea.

The caïdjis seek in vain to rival the speed of the steamers. Their muscles strive uselessly against the steel pistons. Soon they will have to be satisfied with the shorter intermediary trips, and the old retrograde Turks, who weep at the Elbicei Atika as they behold

the costumes of the vanished janissaries, alone will make use of them to repair to their summer houses through hatred of the diabolical inventions of the giaours.

There are also omnibus caïques, heavy craft carrying some thirty people and pulled by four or six rowers who at every stroke rise, ascend a wooden step and throw themselves back with all their weight to move the huge sweeps. These automatic motions, repeated constantly, produce the strangest effect. This economical and slow method of travelling is employed by soldiers, hammals, poor devils, Jews, and old women, and the steamship companies will put an end to it whenever they please, by providing third-class seats and reduced fares.

The patiently expected time of the breaking of the fast had now come. It is celebrated by public rejoicings. The Bosphorus, the Golden Horn, and the basin of the Sea of Marmora then present the liveliest and gayest of aspects. All the ships in port are dressed in many-coloured flags, their ensigns, hoisted chock-a-block, flying out in the wind. The swallow-tailed Turkish standard exhibits its three silvery crescents on a green shield placed on a red field; France unfolds its

tri-colour; Austria hoists its banner, red and white, bearing a shield; Russia its blue Saint Andrew's cross upon a white field; England her cross of Saint George; America her starry sky; Greece her blue cross with the black and white checker of Bavaria in the centre; Morocco its red pennant; Tripoli its half-moons upon the prophet's favourite green colour; Tunis its green, blue, and red, like a silken girdle; and the sun gleams and blazes brightly upon all these banners, the reflections of which lengthen and wind over the illuminated waters. Volleys of artillery salute the Sultan's caïque, which passes by splendid in gold and purple, pulled by thirty vigorous oarsmen, while the sailors on the yards cheer and the frightened albatrosses whirl about in the white smoke.

I take a caïque at Top Khaneh and have myself rowed from vessel to vessel, to examine the shape of the different ships, stopping by preference at those which have come from Trebizond, Moudania, Ismick, Lampsaki. With their lofty, galleried poops, their prows swelling like the breasts of swans, and their long antennæ, they cannot be very different from the vessels that composed the fleet of the Greeks in the days of the War of Troy. The American clippers, so much

talked about, are far from having the same elegance of form, and it would not take a great deal of imagination to fancy that the fair Achilles Peleades is seated on one of these high poops, floating on the sea into which flows the Simois.

As we roam around, my boat passes close by the rocky islet on which rises what the Franks call, no one knows why, Leander's Tower, and the Turks Kiss Koulessi, the Virgin's Tower. Needless to say, Leander has nothing whatever to do with this white tower, since it was the Hellespont and not the Bosphorus which he swam to visit Hero, the lovely priestess of Venus. The truth is that this tower, — or at least, a similar one, — built by Manuel Comnenus in the time of the Lower Empire, held the chain which, fastened to two other points on the European and the Asiatic shores, barred the entrance of the Golden Horn to hostile vessels coming from the Black Sea. If one cares to go farther back, it appears that Damalis, the wife of Chares, the general sent from Athens to help the inhabitants of Byzantium, then attacked by the fleet of Philip of Macedon, died at Chrysopolis and was buried on this islet under a monument surmounted by a heifer.

The day is devoted to prayers and to visits to the mosques; in the evening there is a general illumination. If the view of the harbor, with all the vessels dressed and the incessant motion of the boats, was a marvellous spectacle under a superb Oriental sun, what shall I say of the festival at night. It is now that I feel the powerlessness of pen and brush. A panorama alone could give, with its changing beauty, a faint idea of the magical effect of the light and shade. Salvos of artillery followed each other incessantly, for the Turks delight in burning powder. They burst out in every direction, deafening one with their joyous roar; the minarets of the mosques were lighted up like light-houses, the lines of the Koran blazed like letters of fire against the dark blue of the night; and the many-coloured, dense crowd, divided into human streams, poured down the sloping streets of Galata and Pera. Around the fountain at Top Khaneh sparkled like glow-worms thousands of lights, and the Mosque of Sultan Mahmoud sprang heavenward illumined by points of fire.

The boat took us into the harbour and on board of one of the Lloyd's steamers, whence we could see Constantinople. Top Khaneh, lighted by red and green

Bengal fires, flamed in an apotheosis atmosphere, torn from time to time by the flash of the guns, the crackling of the fireworks, the zigzags of serpents, the explosions of bombs. The Mahmoudieh mosque appeared, through the opal-coloured smoke, like one of the carbuncle edifices created by the imagination of the Arab story tellers to lodge the Queen of Peris. It was fairly dazzling. The vessels at anchor had outlined their masts, yards, and rails with lines of green, blue, red, and yellow lanterns, so that they resembled vessels of gems floating on an ocean of flame, so brilliantly were the waters of the Bosphorus lighted by the reflections of that conflagration of luminous flower-pots, suns, and illuminated ciphers. Seraglio Point stretched out like a promontory of topazes, above which rose, circled with bracelets of fire, the silvern staffs of Saint Sophia, Sultan Achmet, and Osmanieh. On the Asiatic shore Scutari cast myriads of luminous sparks, and the two banks of the Bosphorus formed, as far as the eye could reach, a river of spangles constantly stirred up by the oars of the caïques. Sometimes a distant vessel, hitherto unperceived, was lighted up with a purple and blue aureole and then vanished in the darkness like a dream. These pyrotechnic surprises had the

most charming effect. The steamers, adorned with coloured lamps, came and went, carrying bands, the music of which spread joyously abroad with the breeze. Over all, the sky, as if it also intended to celebrate the feast, was prodigally lavishing its casket of stars upon a vault of the darkest and richest lapis-lazuli, and all the blaze upon earth scarcely managed to cast a red reflection upon its edges. Here and there after a time the lights began to pale, there were breaks in the lines of fires, the guns were fired less frequently, huge banks of smoke the wind could not dissolve curled over the water like monstrous forms; the cold dew of night soaked the thickest clothing. I had to think of returning, an operation not unattended with difficulty and peril. My caïque was waiting for me at the foot of the gangway. I hailed my caïdjis and we were off.

The Bosphorus was filled with the most prodigious swarm imaginable of crafts of all kinds. In spite of warning cries, oars interlocked constantly, rail struck rail, sweeps had to be unshipped along the boats like insects' legs, to avoid being smashed. The sharp points of the prows swept within two inches of your face like javelins or the beaks of birds of prey. The reflection of the dying blaze casting its last gleams,

blinded the caïdjis and made them mistake their road. A boat going at full speed nearly ran us down, and we should surely have suffered that fate if the oarsmen, with incomparable skill, had not backed water with superhuman vigour. At last I arrived safe and sound, at Top Khaneh, through the glitter and sparkle of the waves, in a riot of boats and cries fit to drive one mad, and I returned, stepping carefully over camps of sleeping dogs, to the Hôtel de France on the Little Field by streets which were gradually becoming more and more deserted.

CONSTANTINOPLE

THE WALLS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

I HAD resolved to make a grand round of the outer quarters of Constantinople, seldom visited by travellers, whose curiosity scarcely leads them beyond the Bezestan, the Atmeïdan, Sultan Bayezid's Square, the Old Seraglio, and the neighbourhood of Saint Sophia, in which are concentrated the whole movement of Mussulman life. I therefore started early, accompanied by a young Frenchman who has long inhabited Turkey.

We rapidly descended the Galata slope, traversed the Golden Horn on the bridge of boats, and leaving Yeni Valideh Djami on one side, plunged into a labyrinth of Turkish lanes. The farther we went, the greater was the solitude. The dogs, more savage, looked at us with fierce glances and followed us growling. The wooden houses, discoloured and tumble-down, with hanging trellises, out of plumb, looked like ruined hen-coops. A broken-down fountain filtered water

into a mouldy shell; a dismantled *turbeh* covered with brambles and asphodel, showed in the shadow, through its gratings covered with cobwebs, a few funeral stones leaning to right and left, the inscriptions of which were illegible. Elsewhere a chapel with its dome roughly plastered with lime and flanked by a minaret, resembling a candle with an extinguisher behind it. Above the long walls rose the black tops of the cypresses; clumps of sycamores and plane-trees hung over the street. There were no more mosques with marble columns and Moorish galleries, no more pacha's *konacks* painted in bright colours and projecting their graceful, aerial cabinets; but here and there great heaps of ashes amid which rose a few chimneys of blackened bricks remaining standing, — and over all the wretchedness and loneliness, the pure, white, implacable light of the East which brings out harshly every mean detail.

From lane to lane, from square to square, we reached a great mournful, ruinous khan, with high arches and long stone walls, intended to lodge caravans of camels. It was the hour of prayer, and on the top gallery of the minaret of the neighbouring mosque two phantom-like, white-robed muezzins were walking around calling out in their strange-toned voices the

sacramental formula of Islam to the mute, blind, deaf houses that were falling here in silence and solitude. The words of the Koran, that seemed to drop from heaven, modulated by the suavely guttural voices, awoke no other echo than the plaintive moan of a dog disturbed in his dream, and the beating of the wings of a frightened dove ; nevertheless the muezzins continued on their impassible round, casting the name of Allah and his prophet to the four winds of heaven, like sowers who care not where falls the grain, knowing well that it will find its own furrow. Perhaps even under these worm-eaten roofs, within those hovels apparently abandoned, some of the faithful were spreading out their poor little worn carpets, turning towards Mecca, and repeating with deep faith, "*La Allah, il Allah!*" or "*Mohammed rasoul Allah!*"

A mounted negro passed from time to time; an old woman, leaning against the wall, held out from a heap of rags a monkey-claw, begging for alms, profiting by the unexpected opportunity ; two or three street boys, apparently escaped from a water-colour by Decamps, tried to stuff pebbles into the spout of a dried fountain ; a few lizards ran in perfect security over the stones, and that was all.

We were looking for something to eat, for if we had satisfied our eyes, our stomachs had received no food and every minute increased our sufferings. There were not to be found in this forlorn quarter any of those appetising eating houses where kabobs dusted with pepper spin around before a fire spitted on a perpendicular spit, none of the stalls upon which baklava is spread out in large bars which the confectioner's hand dusts with a light snow of sugar, none of the splendid places offering balls of rice enveloped in leaves, and jars in which slices of cucumber swim in oil, mixed with pieces of meat. All we could find to buy were white mulberries and black soap, which was pretty poor entertainment.

The quarter we next traversed had an entirely different aspect; it no longer was Turkish. The half-opened doors of the houses allowed the interiors to be seen; at the untrellised windows showed lovely female heads wearing rose or blue crépon, and crowned with great plaits of hair in the form of diadems. Young girls, seated on the threshold, looked freely into the street, and we could admire, without putting them to flight, their delicate, pure features, their great blue eyes and fair tresses. In front of the cafés men in white fustanellas, red caps, jackets with long braided sleeves

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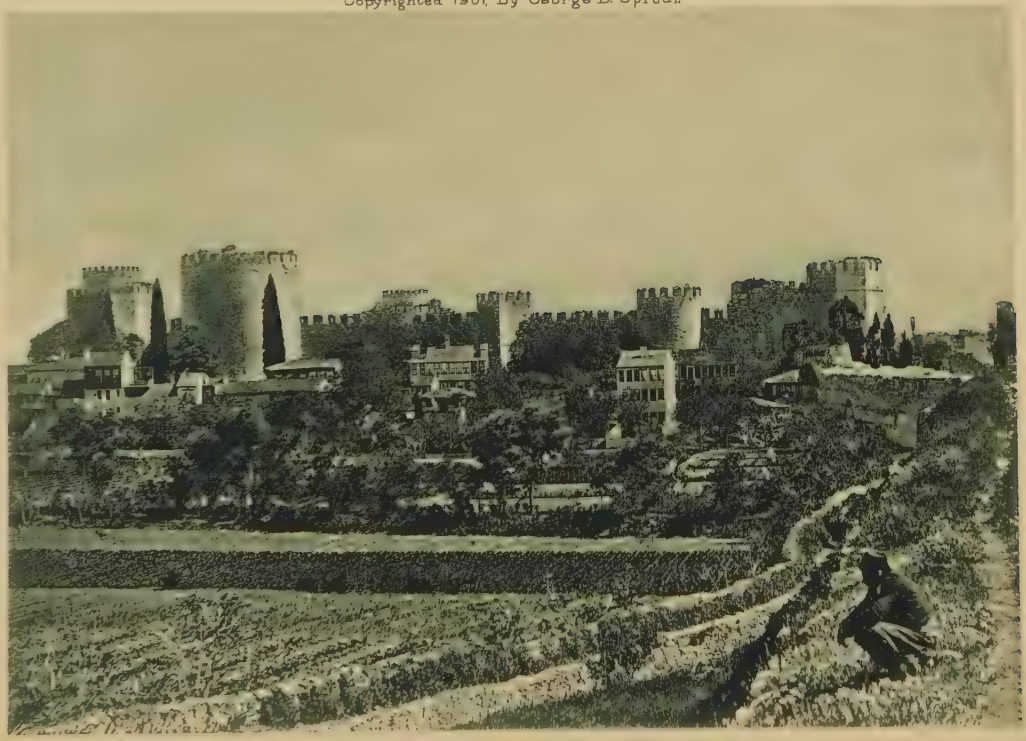

were swallowing glasses of *raki* and getting drunk like good Christians. We were in Psammathia, the quarter inhabited by rayots, non-Mussulman subjects of the Porte, who form a sort of Greek colony in the centre of the Turkish city. Animation had replaced silence; joy, sadness; we felt ourselves among a living race of beings.

We wished to proceed along the outer side of the old walls of Byzantium from the seashore to Edirneh Kapou, and even farther if we were not too tired. I do not believe there exists anywhere on earth a more austere and melancholy walk than this road which runs for more than three miles between ruins on the one hand and a cemetery upon the other. The ramparts, composed of two rows of walls flanked by square towers, have at their foot a broad moat now filled by gardens, and provided with a stone parapet, so that there were three lines to be crossed. These are the old walls of Constantinople, such as they have been left by assaults, time, and earthquakes. In their brick and stone courses are still to be seen the breaches made by catapults, balistas, and rams, and the gigantic culverin, the mastodon of artillery, served by seven hundred gunners, which threw marble balls weighing

six hundred pounds. Here and there a huge crack has split a tower from top to bottom, elsewhere a whole piece of wall has fallen within the moat; but where the stones fall, the wind brings dust and grains, a bush rises in place of the fallen battlements and becomes a tree, the innumerable roots of the parasitical plants keep together the falling bricks. The roots of the arbutus, after having acted as pincers to separate the joints of the stones, now turn into bolts to hold them in, and the wall continues uninterruptedly, showing its broken silhouette against the sky, spreading out its curtains draped with ivy and striped by time with rich, severe tones. Here and there rise the old gates, of Byzantine architecture with excrescences of Turkish masonry. They are still half recognisable. It is difficult to believe there is a living city behind these dead ramparts, which nevertheless conceal Constantinople. It is easy to fancy one's self near one of those cities of Arab tales, the population of which has been turned into stone by a spell. A few minarets alone rise above the vast line of ruins and testify that Islam has set its capital there. The conqueror of Constantine XIII, if he were to return to this world, could well repeat his melancholy Persian quotation: "The spider spins its

web in the palace of the emperors, and the owl sings its night song on the towers of Ephrasiab."

Four hundred years ago those red walls, now overgrown with the vegetation of ruins, slowly perishing in solitude, and overrun by lizards, saw crowding at their feet the hordes of Asia, driven on by the terrible Mohammed II. The corpses of Janissaries and Timariots rolled, covered with wounds, into the moat where now grow peaceful vegetables; cascades of blood flowed down their sides where now hang the filaments of the saxifrage and of wall-flowers. One of the most terrible of human struggles, the combat of a race against a race, of a religion against a religion, took place in this desert where now reigns the silence of death. As usual, lusty barbarism won the day over decrepit civilisation; and while the Greek priest was frying fish, unable to believe in an attack of Constantinople, the triumphant Mohammed II was riding his horse into Saint Sophia, and putting his bloody hand upon the wall of the sanctuary; the cross was falling from the top of the dome to be replaced by the crescent, and from under a heap of dead was drawn Emperor Constantine, covered with blood, mutilated, and recognisable only by the golden eagles that clasped his purple cothurns.

CONSTANTINOPLE

BALATA. THE PHANAR. A TURKISH BATH

NEAR the Andrinople Gate we alighted to drink a cup of coffee and smoke a chibouque in a café filled with a multicoloured throng of customers, and then continued on our way, still along the cemetery, which appeared to be endless. At last, however, we reached the end of the wall and re-entered the city, riding our tired horses carefully, as they stumbled against the marble turbans and broken tombstones that cover the slippery slopes. In this wise we reached a curious quarter, the appearance of which was very peculiar. The dwellings were more ruinous than ever, filthy and wretched, the sulky-looking, bleareyed, haggard façades were cracked, disjointed, dislocated, and rotting; the roofs looked scurfy and the walls leprous; the scales of the grayish wash came off like the pellicles of a skin disease. Some bleeding dogs, reduced to skeletons, a prey to vermin and bitten all over, were asleep in the black, fetid mud. Villain-

ous rags hung from the windows, behind which, by standing in our stirrups, we could get a glimpse of strange faces, sickly and livid, with complexions the colour of wax and lemon, heads covered with huge cushions of white linen, and stuck on little, thin, flat-chested bodies clothed in stuff shining like the cover of a wet umbrella; dull, colourless, wan eyes, showing in the yellow faces like bits of coal in an omelette, turned slowly upon us and then turned again to their work. Fearful phantoms passed along the hovels, their brows bound with black-spotted, white rags, as if a usurer had been wiping his pen on them all day, their bodies scarce concealed in loathsome garments. We were in Balata, the Jewish quarter, the Ghetto of Constantinople. We beheld the result of four centuries of oppression and insult; the dunghill under which that nationality, proscribed everywhere, conceals itself as do certain insects, to avoid its persecutors. It hopes to escape through the disgust which it inspires; it lives in dirt and assumes its colour. It is difficult to imagine anything more loathsome, more filthy, more purulent. Plica, scrofula, itch, and leprosy, all the Biblical impurities which it has never got rid of since the days of Moses, consume it without the people car-

ing, so thoroughly are they given up to money-making. They do not even pay attention to plague if they can make something by the clothing of the dead. In this hideous quarter crowd together Aaron and Isaac, Abraham and Jacob. These wretches, some of whom are millionaires, feed on fish-heads, cast away because they are considered poisonous. This repulsive food to which are due certain peculiar diseases, from which these people suffer, attracts them because it is exceedingly low in price.

Opposite, on the other side of the Golden Horn, on a bare, red, dusty slope, lies the cemetery in which are buried their unhealthy generations. The sun blazes down upon the shapeless tombstones, no blade of grass grows around them, no tree casts its shade upon them; the Turks would not grant that alleviation to the proscribed corpses, and took particular care to make the Jewish cemetery look like a gehenna. The Jews are scarcely permitted to engrave a few mysterious Hebraic characters upon the cubes that dot this desolate and accursed hill.

We at last left this ignoble quarter, and turned into the Phanar quarter, inhabited by Greeks of rank, a sort of West End by the side of a Court of Miracles.

The stone houses have a fine architectural look. Several of them have balconies supported by brackets carved in the shape of steps or volutes; some of the older recall the narrow façades of the small mansions of the Middle Ages, half fortresses, half dwellings. The walls are thick enough to stand a siege, the iron shutters are ball-proof, enormous gratings protect the windows, which are as narrow as those of barbicans; the cornices are often cut into the shape of battlements, and project like look-outs, a needless defensive display useful only against fire, for the powerless flames in vain seek to sweep through this stone quarter.

It is here that ancient Byzantium has taken refuge, that live in obscurity the descendants of the Komnenoi, the Duka, the Palaiologoi, princes without principalities, whose ancestors wore the purple and in whose veins flows imperial blood. Their slaves greet them as though they were kings, and they console each other for their decadence by these simulacra of respect. Great wealth is contained within these solid walls, very ornate internally, but very simple externally; for in the East wealth is timid and exhibits itself only when safe from prying eyes. The Phanariotes have long been famous for their diplomatic skill. Formerly

they directed all the international affairs of the Porte, but their credit seems to have greatly diminished since the Greek revolt.

At the end of the Phanar Quarter one enters again the streets that line the Golden Horn and where swarms a busy commercial population. At every step are met hammals bearing a burden hung between them from a pole, asses harnessed between two long planks, of which they each support one end, blocking traffic and breaking down whatever happens to be in their way when they are obliged to turn into a cross street. The poor brutes sometimes remain blocked against the walls of narrow lanes, unable to go forward or backward; soon there results an agglomeration of horses, foot-passengers, porters, women, children, dogs, grumbling, cursing, crying, and barking in every key, until the ass-driver pulls the animal by the tail and thus raises the blockade. The crowd disperses and calm is re-established, not, however, until a number of blows have been struck, the asses, the innocent cause of the trouble, naturally getting the greater part of them.

The ground rises like an amphitheatre from the sea to the ramparts along which we had just travelled, and

above the maze of roofs of the Turkish houses is seen here and there a fragment of crenellated wall, or the arch of an aqueduct, spurning the wretched modern buildings ready prepared for conflagration, and that a match would suffice to set on fire. How many Constantinoples have these old, blackened stones already seen falling in ashes at their feet! A Turkish house a hundred years old is rare in Stamboul.

The next day I was somewhat tired, and I resolved to take a Turkish bath, for there is nothing so restful; so I proceeded towards the Mahmoud Baths situated near the Bazaar. They are the finest and largest in Constantinople.

The tradition of the antique thermæ, lost with us, has been preserved in the East. Christianity, by preaching contempt of matter, has caused to be abandoned, little by little, the care of the perishable body, as smacking too much of paganism. I forget who was the Spanish monk that, some time after the conquest of Granada, preached against the use of the Moorish baths, and charged those who would not give them up with sensualism and heresy.

In the East, where personal cleanliness is a religious obligation, the baths have preserved all the refinement

of Greece and Rome. They are large buildings of fine architecture, with cupolas, domes, pillars of marble, alabaster, and coloured breccia, and are filled with an army of bathers and *tellacks*, recalling the scrubbers, rubbers, and anointers of Rome and Byzantium.

The customer first enters a great hall opening on the street, enclosed by a portière of tapestry. Near the door the bath-master is seated on the ground, between a box in which he puts the receipts, and a coffer in which are deposited the money, jewels, and other valuables deposited on entering, and for which he becomes answerable. Around the room, the temperature of which is about the same as that outside, run two galleries, one above the other, provided with camp-beds. In the centre of the constantly wet marble pavement a fountain throws up its jet of water, which splashes into a double basin. Around the basin are ranged pots of basil, mint, and other odoriferous plants, the perfume of which is particularly grateful to the Turks. Blue, white, and rose striped cloths are drying on cords, or hung from the ceiling like the flags and standards from the vaulting of Westminster and the Invalides. On the beds are smoking, drinking coffee or sherbet, or else sleeping covered up to the chin like babies, bathers

who are waiting until they have ceased to perspire, before they dress.

I was taken up into the second gallery by a narrow wooden stair, and was shown to a bed. When I stripped off my clothes, two attendants wrapped round my head a napkin in the shape of a turban, and clothed me from the loins to the ankles in a piece of stuff that wrinkled on my hips like the loin-cloth of Egyptian statues. At the foot of the stair I found a pair of wooden clogs into which I slipped my feet, and my attendants, supporting me under the arms, passed with me from the first room to the second, the temperature of which was higher. I was left in it for a few moments to accustom my lungs to the burning temperature of the third hall, which is as high as ninety-five to a hundred degrees.

These baths are different from our vapour baths. Under the marble flagging a fire is continually burning, and the water when poured out turns at once into a white steam, instead of coming from a boiler in strident jets. They are dry baths, as it were, and the very high temperature alone provokes perspiration.

Under a cupola fitted with thick panes of greenish glass through which filters faint daylight, seven or eight

slabs very much like tombs are arranged to receive the bodies of the bathers, who, stretched out like corpses upon a dissecting table, undergo the first process of a Turkish bath. The muscles are lightly pinched, or rubbed like soft paste, until a pearly sweat comes out like that formed around the ice-pails used for champagne. The result is very quickly attained. When through the open pores the perspiration ran down my softened limbs, I was made to sit up, slipped on the clogs in order to avoid touching the burning pavement with my bare feet, and was led to one of the niches around the rotunda. In each of these niches there was a basin of white marble fitted with taps of hot and cold water. The attendant made me sit down by the basin, drew on a camel's-hair glove, and rubbed down first my arms, then my legs, then my torso, so as to bring the blood to the skin, without, however, scratching or hurting me in the least in spite of the apparent rough handling. Then with a brass pail he drew from the basin hot water, and poured it over my body. When I had dried somewhat, he caught hold of me again and polished me with the palm of his bare hand, poured water over me again, rubbed me softly with long pieces of tow filled with foamy soap, parted

my hair and cleansed the skin of my head, an operation which is followed by another cataract of cold water to avoid the congestion which might be caused by the high temperature. These different ceremonies over, I was swathed in dry wraps, and taken back to my bed, where two young lads massaged me for the last time. I remained about an hour plunged in a dreamy reverie, drinking coffee and iced lemonade, and when I went out I was so light, so fresh, so supple, so thoroughly free from fatigue that it seemed to me "the angels of heaven were walking by my side."

CONSTANTINOPLE

THE BEÏRAM

RAMAZAN was over. Without desiring in the least to reflect upon the zeal of Mussulmans, it may be said that the ending of the fast is welcomed with general satisfaction, for in spite of the nightly carnival which accompanies the fast, it is none the less painful. At this time every Turk renews his wardrobe, and very pretty it is to see the streets diapered with new costumes in bright, gay colours, adorned with embroidery in all the brilliancy of newness, instead of being filled with picturesquely sordid rags more pleasant to look at in a picture by Decamps than in reality. Every Mussulman then puts on his gayest and richest clothes, — blue, rose, pistachio green, cinnamon, yellow, scarlet, bloom out on every hand; the muslin turbans are clean, the slippers free from mud and dust. The metropolis of Islam has made its toilet from top to toe. If a traveller coming by steamer should land at that time and go back the next day, he would carry away a very

different idea of Constantinople from what he would have after a prolonged stay. The city of the Turks would strike him as much more Turkish than it really is.

Through the streets walk, with flutes and drums, musicians who have serenaded, during Ramazan, the houses of the wealthy. When the noise they produce has lasted long enough to attract the attention of the dwellers in the house, a grating is opened, a hand issues and drops a shawl, a piece of stuff, a sash, or something similar, which is immediately hung at the end of a pole loaded with presents of the same kind. It is the bakshîsh intended to recompense the trouble taken by the players, usually dervish novices. They are Mussulman *pifferari*, paid at one time instead of getting every day a sou or a para.

The Beïram is a ceremony something like the Spanish kissing of hands, when all the great dignitaries of the Empire come to pay their court to the Padisha. Turkish magnificence then reveals itself in all its splendour, and it is one of the best opportunities for a stranger to study and admire the luxury usually concealed behind the mysterious walls of the Seraglio. It is not, however, easy to obtain admission to this func-

tion unless one is fictitiously included in the staff of some hospitable embassy. The Sardinian legation was kind enough to do me this favour, and at three o'clock in the morning one of its khavasses was smiting the door of my hostelry with the hilt of his sword. I was already up, dressed, and ready to follow him. I descended the stairs in haste, and we began to traverse the steep streets of Pera, waking hordes of sleeping dogs that looked up at the sound of our steps and weakly tried to bark by way of salve to their consciences. We met lines of loaded camels, shaving the walls of the houses and leaving scarce room to pass.

A rosy tint bathed the upper portion of the painted wooden houses that border the streets with their projecting stories and look-outs which no municipal regulations interfere with, while the lower portions were still plunged in a transparent, azure shadow. Most charming indeed is dawn as it plays upon these roofs, domes, and minarets, colouring them with tints fresher than I have seen anywhere else. They make one feel close to the land of the rising sun. The sky in Constantinople is not of a hard blue like Southern skies. It is very like that of Venice, but rather more luminous and vaporous. The sun, as it rises, draws aside cur-

tains of silvery gauze. It is only later that the atmosphere takes on an azure tint, and when you walk out at three in the morning, you thoroughly appreciate the local accuracy of the epithet *rododactulos* which Homer invariably bestows upon dawn.

We were to call for a number of persons on our way. Wonderful to relate, every one was ready, and having got our little troop together, we descended to the landing of Top Khaneh, where the embassy caïque awaited us. In spite of the early hour, the Golden Horn and the broad basin at its entrance were most animated. Every vessel was already dressed from stem to stern with many-coloured flags; an infinite number of gilded and painted boats furnished with magnificent carpets and propelled by vigorous oarsmen cut through the pearly, rosy waters; the flotilla bearing pachas, viziers, and beys arriving from their summer palaces on the banks of the Bosphorus, was proceeding towards Seraglio Point. The albatrosses and gulls, somewhat terrified by this premature tumult, soared above the boats, uttering little cries, and seemed to drive away with their wings the last remains of the mist, blown about by the breeze like swan's-down.

A great mob of caïques crowded around the landing of the Green Kiosk in front of the Seraglio quay, and we had considerable difficulty in reaching the shore, where syces were leading splendid horses waiting for their masters.

At last the Seraglio Gates were opened, and we traversed courts planted with cypresses, sycamores, and plane-trees of monstrous size, bordered by Chinese-looking kiosks, buildings with crenellated walls and projecting turrets, recalling faintly English feudal architecture, a mingling of garden, palace, and fortress; and we reached a court in the corner of which rises the old church of Saint Irenæus, now used as an arsenal, and containing a small, tumble-down house pierced with many windows, reserved for the ambassadors, and whence one can see the procession pass as from a box at the theatre.

The ceremony begins with a religious function. The Sultan, accompanied by the great dignitaries of the Empire, goes to pray at Saint Sophia, the metropolis of the mosques of Constantinople. It was then about six o'clock. Expectation wrought every one up to a high pitch of excitement; all bent forward to see if anything was appearing. Suddenly a mighty uproar

broke out. It was a Turkish march arranged by Donizetti's brother, who is band-master to the Sultan. The soldiers sprang to their arms and formed a double line. These troops, who were part of the Imperial Guard, wore white trousers and red jackets like English grenadiers in undress. The fez rather suited the uniform. The officers and the *mouschirs* bestrode the handsome horses the syces had been leading.

The Sultan, coming from his summer palace, was proceeding towards Saint Sophia. First came the grand vizier, the seraskier, the capitan-pacha and the various ministers, wearing straight frock coats of the reform, but so covered with gold braid that it really required a stretch of the imagination to recognise a European costume, even though the tarbousch had not made them look sufficiently Eastern. They were surrounded with staff officers, secretaries, and servants splendidly embroidered, and mounted like their masters upon fine horses. Next came the pachas, the beys of provinces, the aghas, the seliktars, and officers of the four Odas of the Selamlik, whose strange names would tell the reader nothing, but whose business it is, the one to take off the Sultan's boots, another to hold his stirrup, a third to hand him the napkin, etc., the

tzoudahar, or chief of pages, the icoglans, and a crowd of followers forming the Padisha's household.

Then came a detachment of the body-guard, whose uniform entirely fulfilled the idea of Eastern luxury. These guards, selected from among the handsomest men, wear orange-red velvet tunics richly braided and frogged with gold, white Broussa silk trousers, and a sort of red toque very like the headgear of our chief-justices, surmounted by a huge crest of peacock plumes two or three feet high, recalling the birds' wings on Fingal's helmet in the Ossianic compositions of painters in the times of the Empire. For offensive arms they have a curved sabre fastened to a belt covered with embroidery, and a great halberd, damascened and gilded, the blade of which is ferociously cut out like the old Asiatic weapons. Next came half a dozen superb horses, Arabs or Barbs, led by grooms, caparisoned with magnificent saddle-cloths embroidered with gold and constellated with gems, bearing the imperial cipher, the caligraphic complications and interlacings of which form an extremely elegant arabesque. The ornamentation was so close that the red, blue, or green of the stuff almost disappeared. Luxurious saddles replace in the East luxurious car-

riages, although many pachas have begun to import coupés from Vienna and Paris. The handsome animals seemed to be conscious of their beauty. The light fell in silky shimmers on their polished quarters, their manes flowed in brilliant tresses with every motion of their head, powerful muscles swelled on their steel-like legs. They had the gentle, proud air, the almost human glance, the elasticity of motion, the coquettish prancings, the aristocratic port of thoroughbred horses that explain the idolatry and passion of the Oriental for those superb creatures, the qualities of which are lauded in the Koran, which recommends their care in several places, so as to add religious sanction to this natural taste.

These animals preceded the Sultan, who was riding a splendid horse whose saddle-cloth sparkled with rubies, topazes, pearls, emeralds, and other gems, forming the flowers of the gold-embroidered foliage.

Behind the Sultan marched the Kislar Agassi and the Capou Agassi, the chiefs of the black and the white eunuchs; then a squat, obese, ferocious-looking dwarf dressed like a pacha, who occupies a post analogous to that of court jester at the courts of mediæval kings. This dwarf, whom Paolo Veronese

would have put into one of his great feasts, a parrot on his fist and wearing a particoloured surcoat, or else playing with a greyhound, had been hoisted, no doubt by way of contrast, upon the back of a big horse which he found it difficult to bestride with his bow legs. I believe this is the only dwarf of the kind now existing in Europe. The office of Cuillette, Triboulet, and l'Angeli has been maintained in Turkey only.

The eunuchs no longer wear the tall white cap which is their distinguishing mark in comic operas; their dress consists of a fez and frock coat, yet they have a peculiar look which makes them easily recognisable. The Kislar Agassi is hideous enough, with his sallow black face, wrinkled and glazed with grayish tones, but the Capou Agassi is uglier yet, his hideousness not being masked by a negro complexion. His pasty, unhealthy-looking fat face, seamed with many wrinkles and of an ugly livid white, in which wink two dead eyes under pendulous eyelids, and his drooping, ill-tempered lips make him look like an angry old woman. These two monsters are powerful personages; they enjoy the revenues of Mecca and Medina, they are enormously rich, and dispense weal or woe in the seraglio, although their influence has

been greatly diminished nowadays. It is they who govern despotically the swarms of houris whom no human glance ever profanes, and it will be readily understood that around them centre innumerable intrigues.

A squad of body-guards closed the procession. The brilliant train, — though less varied than formerly, when the fullest Asiatic luxury shone on the fantastic costumes of pashas, capidgi-pachas, bostangis, mabaindzes, janissaries, with their turbans, kalpaks, Circassian helmets, wheel-lock arquebuses, maces, bows and arrows, — disappeared through the arch of the passage leading from the Seraglio to Saint Sophia. Then, about an hour later, it returned and filed past in the opposite direction but in the same order.

During this time my companions and myself had perched ourselves upon a well, boarded over and forming a sort of tribune in a vast yard planted with great trees close to the kiosk at the door of which was to take place the ceremony of the kissing of the feet. Opposite to us rose a great building surmounted by a multitude of pillars painted yellow, the bases and capitals picked out in white. The pillars were chimneys and the great building was the kitchen, for every day

fifteen hundred people, according to the Turkish expression, eat the bread of the Grand Seignior.

While waiting for the return of the procession, let me describe the spot where takes place the kissing of the feet. It is a great kiosk, the roof of which, supported by pillars, projects like an awning around the building; the pillars, the bases and capitals of which are carved in the style of the Alhambra, support arcades and joists which bear up the eaves of the roof; these on their under part are curiously wrought into lozenges, compartments, and interlacings. The door, flanked by two niches, opens amid a mass of carvings, scrolls, fleurons, and arabesques, among which twist volutes and rocaille ornaments, no doubt added later, as is often the case with Turkish palaces. On the wall, on either side of the door, are painted two Chinese perspectives such as are seen in children's comedies, representing galleries, the checkered black and white pavement of which is prolonged indefinitely. These curious frescoes must have been the work of some Genoese journeyman glazier taken captive by the Moorish corsairs, and produce a singular effect on this gem of Mussulman architecture.

The Sultan, followed by a few high dignitaries, entered the kiosk, where he partook of a light collation while

the final preparations for the reception were being made. In front of the kiosk, between two pillars of the façade corresponding to the door, was stretched a carpet of black cashmere, on which was placed a throne, or rather, a divan in the shape of a sofa, covered with plates of gold and silver gilt in the Byzantine style. A footstool to match was placed in front of the throne, and the band drew up in a semicircle opposite the kiosk.

When Abdul Medjid reappeared, the band played, the troops shouted, "Long live the glorious Sultan!" and a wave of enthusiasm passed over the crowd. Every one was stirred, even the non-Mussulman spectators. Abdul Medjid stood for a few moments on the footstool. In his fez was an aigrette of heron's plumes clasped with diamonds the mark of supreme power. He wore a sort of frock coat of dark blue cloth fastened with a clasp of brilliants; under it sparkled the gold embroideries of his uniform; white satin trousers, varnished boots which reflected the light, and well-fitting, straw-coloured gloves. His dress, although simple, eclipsed all the splendours of the subordinate personages. Then he sat down and the prostrations began.

It is only the great dignitaries who have the right to kiss the foot of the Glorious Sultan. This particular favour is reserved for the vizier, the ministers, and a few privileged pachas. The vizier, starting from the corner of the kiosk corresponding to the right of the Sultan, traversed the semicircle along the line of body guards and bandsmen; then, having arrived opposite the throne, he advanced to the footstool after having made an Oriental salutation, and bending over the master's foot, he kissed the sacred boot as reverently as a fervent Catholic kisses the Pope's slipper. Having performed this ceremony, he withdrew backward and made room for another. Seven or eight of the chief personages of the empire followed, making the same bow, the same genuflection, the same prostration, and retiring backward. While this was going on, the Sultan's face remained impassive, his fixed eyes seemed to look without seeing, like the marble eyes of a statue; not a muscle moved, not a change came over his face, there was nothing to lead one to suppose he knew what was going on. Nor, indeed, could the splendid Padisha notice, considering the prodigious distance which separates him from mankind, the humble worms that crawled in the dust at his feet; and yet his indifferent

immobility was in no wise magniloquent or affected. It was the aristocratic and careless disdain of the great man receiving honours which are due to him without paying attention to them, the haughty somnolence of a god tired out by his devotees, who are only too glad that he condescends to remember them.

This procession of pachas led me to notice a curious thing, — the fearful stoutness of personages in high station. They were of absolutely monstrous proportions, like hippopotami, and found it very difficult to perform the task called for by etiquette. You cannot imagine the contortions these stout people, obliged to prostrate themselves to the ground and then to rise up, had to indulge in. Some who were broader than they were tall, and looked like globes one on top of the other, ran the risk of upsetting themselves and remaining prone at the master's feet.

Next to the pachas came the Sheik ul Islam, in white caftan and turban of the same colour, with a gold band across the forehead. The Sheik ul Islam is in a way the Mohammedan pope, a very powerful and venerated personage; therefore when, after having made the customary salutation, he prepared to prostrate himself like the others, Abdul Medjid emerged

from his marmorean calm and, satisfied with this mark of deference, raised him graciously.

The ulemas next passed by, but instead of kissing the Sultan's foot, they had to be satisfied with touching with their lips the edge of his frock-coat, not being great enough to merit the former favour. At this point a slight incident occurred. The former Scherif of Mecca, a little old, brown-faced man with a gray beard, who had been dismissed on account of his fanaticism, threw himself at the feet of the Sultan, who repelled him quickly and thus avoided his homage while he imperiously made a sign of refusal. Two tall young fellows, almost like mulattoes, so tanned were they, wearing long green pelisses and turbans with gold bands, and who appeared to be the sons of the old man, also endeavoured to cast themselves at the Sultan's feet, but they were not received any better, and the three of them were escorted out of the place.

After the ulemas came other officers, military or civil, of lower grade, who could not expect to kiss either the foot or the frock-coat. A pacha held out to them the gold fringe of one end of the Sultan's sash at the end of the divan. It was enough for them to touch something belonging to the master. They

arrived, one after the other, and going around the whole circle, put their hand to their heart and their brow, after having placed it almost on the ground, touched the scarf, and passed on. The dwarf, standing behind the throne, looked at them with a sarcastic air and the grimace of a wicked genie. During this time the band was playing selections from "Elisire d'Amore" and "Lucrezia Borgia," the guns were thundering in the distance, and the terrified pigeons on the mosque of Sultan Bayezid flew away in mad whirls and soared above the Seraglio gardens. When the last functionary had paid homage, the Sultan re-entered his kiosk amid frantic cheering, and I returned to Pera to a breakfast which I stood greatly in need of.

CONSTANTINOPLE

FIRES

IN a town such as Constantinople, built almost wholly of wood, and with the carelessness which is the consequence of Turkish fatalism, fires are considered as minor affairs. A house sixty years old is rare. Except the mosques and aqueducts, the walls, the fountains, a few Greek houses in the Phanar quarter, and a few Genoese buildings in Galata, everything is built of wood. The vanished centuries have left no trace, no witness standing on this site constantly swept by flames. The appearance of the city is entirely renewed every half-century, without, however, varying greatly. I do not speak of Pera, the Marseilles of the East, which on the site of every wooden house burned down immediately builds a solid stone edifice, and which will soon be a thoroughly European city.

At the top of the Seraskierat Tower, a prodigiously lofty white lighthouse which rises into the heavens not far from the domes and minarets of Sultan Bayezid, walks continually a sentry watching the immense

horizon unrolled at his feet for the puff of black smoke, for the flash of red flame springing from a roof. The moment the watchman perceives an incipient conflagration, he hangs from the top of the tower a basket in the daytime and a lantern at night, with a certain combination of signals that indicates the quarter of the city. A gong sounds, a lugubrious cry of "*Stamboul hiangin var!*" rises in sinister fashion through the streets, everybody becomes excited, and the water-carriers, who are also firemen, start off at a run in the direction indicated by the watchman. A similar watch is kept on the Tower of Galata, which, on the other side of the Golden Horn, stands almost opposite the Seraskierat Tower. The Sultan, the vizier and the pachas are bound to go in person to a fire. If the Sultan is withdrawn within his harem with some of his women, an odalisque dressed in red, wearing a scarlet turban, goes to the room, raises the portière, and remains standing silent and sinister. The apparition of the blazing phantom tells him that Constantinople is burning and that he has to perform his duty as a ruler.

I was one day seated on a tomb, busy scribbling some verses in the Little Field of the Dead at Pera,

when, through the cypresses, I saw rising a bluish smoke that turned yellow and then black, and through which flashed flames dulled by the brilliant light of the sun. I rose, sought an open spot, and perceived at the foot of the cemetery hill Kassim Pacha burning. Kassim Pacha is a pretty mean quarter inhabited by poor people, Jews and Armenians, and lies between the cemetery and the Arsenal. I went down the main street, bordered by stalls and hovels, the centre being a filthy gutter, a sort of open sewer spanned by culverts here and there. The fire was still confined to the neighbourhood of the mosque, the minaret of which was uncommonly like a candle with a tin extinguisher. I was afraid to see the minaret disappear in the flames, when a change of wind drove them in another direction, so that those who believed they were safe were suddenly threatened.

The street was full of negresses carrying mattresses rolled up, hammals bearing boxes, men saving their pipe-stems, frightened women dragging a child by one hand and carrying in the other a bundle of clothes, khavasses and soldiers armed with long poles and hooks, sakkas traversing the crowd, their pumps on their shoulders, horsemen galloping off in search of reinforcements

without the least thought of foot-passengers; everybody bumping, jostling, tumbling, with cries and insults in every language under the sun. The tumult could not have been worse. Meanwhile the flames were marching on, broadening the range of the damage. Fearing to be thrown down and trampled under foot, I made my way back to the Pera heights and climbing upon a Marmora marble stone, I gazed, in company with Turks, Greeks, and Armenians, at the painful sight at the foot of the hill.

The burning noonday beams fell vertically upon the roofs of brown tiles, or tarred planks of Kassim Pacha, one house after another blazing up like a rocket. First a small jet of white smoke would show through some crack, then a thin tongue of scarlet flame followed the white smoke, the house turned dark, the windows turned red, and in a few minutes the whole of the building fell in amid a cloud of smoke. Against the background of blazing vapour showed on the edges of the roofs, like black silhouettes, men pouring water on the boards to prevent their catching fire; others, with hooks and axes, were pulling down walls to contain the fire. Firemen, standing upon a cross-beam which had remained intact, were directing the nozzles of their

pumps against the flames. From afar these pipes, with their flexible leather hose and their bright brass work, looked like angry adders fighting fire-eating dragons and hurling silver bolts against them. Sometimes the dragon vomited from its black bowels a whirlwind of sparks to drive back the adder, but the latter returned to the charge, hissing and furious, hurling a lance of water that sparkled like diamonds. After alternations of diminution and increase, the fire died out for lack of material. There was nothing to be seen but smoking ruins.

The next day I visited the place. Two or three hundred houses had burned down. It was not much, if one takes into account the extreme combustibility of the material. The mosque, protected by its stone walls and cloister, had remained intact. On the site of the burned hovels rose the brick chimneys that had resisted the fire. Curious indeed were these reddish obelisks, isolated from the buildings which surrounded them the day before. They looked like huge skittles set up for the amusement of Typhon and Briareus.

Upon the still hot and smoking ruins of their vanished homes the former owners had built temporary shelters out of reed mattings, old carpets, and sailcloth,

supported on posts, and were smoking their pipes with the resignation of Oriental fatalists, horses were fastened to posts at the spot where had stood their stable; pieces of wall and ends of nailed plank re-constituted the harem. A cavadji was boiling his coffee on a stove, the only thing left in his stall, on the former site of which all his faithful clients were seated in the ashes. Farther on bakers were taking off with wooden saucers the outer layer of the heaps of corn, which alone had been damaged by the flames. Poor wretches were hunting under the still glowing embers for nails and bits of iron-work, the remains of their fortune, but did not appear particularly unhappy. I did not see at Kassim Pacha those despairing, mourning, wailing groups which a similar disaster would certainly collect in France upon the ruins of a village or of a quarter. In Constantinople it is quite an ordinary affair to see one's home burned down.

I followed close to the Golden Horn, as far as the Arsenal, the track of the fire. The fearful heat was further increased by the radiation from the calcined ground, still heated by the scarce extinguished flames. I walked over hot coals covered with perfidious ashes, through half-consumed débris, — boards, joints, beams,

broken divans, and coffers; sometimes over gray spots, sometimes over black, sometimes through red smoke, and amid the reflections of sunbeams hot enough to bake an egg. Then I returned through a picturesque lane along a brook full of old shoes and fragments of pottery, that afforded, with its two shaky bridges, pretty subjects for water-colour drawings.

I had seen a fire by day; all I needed now was to see one by night. Nor had I long to wait. One evening a crimson light which I cannot compare to anything better than the aurora borealis, flushed the heavens on the other side of the Golden Horn. I happened to be eating an ice on the promenade of the Little Field, and immediately hastened down to hire a caïque to cross over to the scene of the conflagration; when, as I was passing by the Galata Tower, one of my Constantinople friends who accompanied me bethought himself of ascending the tower, whence one can easily see the opposite shore of the harbour. A gratuity did away with the scruples of the keeper, and we started climbing in the darkness, feeling the wall with our hands, trying each step with our feet, up very steep stairs, the spiral of which was broken by landing-places and doors. We thus reached the lantern, and

walking over the copper roof, leaned upon the stone parapet that crowns the tower.

It was the oil and paint stores which were burning. These buildings are situated on the shore, and the water, reflecting the flames, produced the aspect of a double fire, in the midst of which the houses stood out like black silhouettes sharply cut out, and with luminous holes in them. Long lines of fire, broken by the rippling waves, spread out over the Golden Horn, which at that moment looked like a vast punch-bowl. The flames rose to a prodigious height, red, blue, yellow, and green, according to the materials which fed them. Sometimes a more vivid phosphorescence, a more incandescent blaze broke out in the general glow. Innumerable sparks flew into the air like the gold and silver rain of a firework shell, and in spite of the distance, we could clearly hear the crackling of the flames. Above the fire rolled vast masses of smoke, bluish on the one side and rosy on the other, like clouds at sunset. The Tower of the Seraskierat, Yeni Valideh Djami, Souleïman, the Mosque of Achmet, the Mosque of Selim, and higher up, on the crest of the hill, the arcades of the aqueduct of Valens glowed red. The ships and vessels in the harbour stood out black

against the scarlet background. Two or three crafts took fire, and for a time there was reason to fear a general conflagration of the fleet of vessels, but the flames were soon extinguished. In spite of the cold wind which froze us at this elevation — for my companion and myself were dressed rather lightly — we could not drag ourselves away from this disastrously magnificent spectacle, the beauty of which made us understand and almost excuse Nero watching the burning of Rome from his tower on the Palatine. It was a splendid blaze, a pyrotechnical display carried to the hundredth power, but with effects that pyrotechnics can never attain; and as we did not feel that we had lighted it, we were able to enjoy it like artists, while regretting the great destruction.

Two or three days later Pera took fire in its turn. The tekieh of the Whirling Dervishes was soon the prey of the flames, and then I saw a fine example of Oriental phlegm. The sheik of the dervishes was smoking his pipe on a carpet which was pulled away from time to time as the fire advanced. The little cemetery that extends in front of the tekieh was soon filled with all sorts of articles, utensils, furniture, and merchandise, from the threatened houses, everything being thrown

out of the windows for the sake of haste. The most grotesque objects were spread over the tombs in a fearful and comical mess. The population of that quarter — almost all Christians — did not exhibit the same resignation as Turks do under similar circumstances; all the women were crying or weeping, seated upon their heap of furniture; shouts and yells were heard on all sides; disorder and tumult were at their height. At last the firemen managed to check the fire, but from the tekieh to the foot of the hill nothing was left standing but chimney-stalks.

In the worst disasters there are always some comical incidents. I saw a man nearly burned alive while trying to save some stove-piping; and in another place a poor old man and a poor old woman who were mourning their son would not let the beloved body go; it was at last necessary to carry them away by force. That was the touching side. By way of picturesqueness, I noticed the cypresses in the garden of the dervishes, which dried up, turned yellow, and took fire like seven-branched candlesticks.

Three or four nights later, Pera took fire at the other end, near the Great Field of the Dead. A score of

wooden houses burned up like matches, sending up into the blue night-sky sheaves of sparks and burning coals, in spite of the water that was being poured upon them. The High Street of Pera had a most sinister aspect. The companies of firemen, their pumps on their shoulders, traversed it at top speed, upsetting everything and everybody on their way, which they are privileged to do, for their orders are not to turn aside for any one; mouschirs on horseback, followed by squads of grim servants running on foot behind them like the "Turkish Patrol" of Decamps, cast by the light of the torches strange shadows upon the walls; the dogs, trampled under foot, fled in pain, uttering plaintive howls; men and women passed by, bending under bundles; syces dragged frightened horses by the bridle. It was at once terrible and splendid. Fortunately a few stone houses stopped the progress of the fire.

That same week Psammathia, the Greek quarter of Constantinople, became a prey to the flames; twenty-five hundred houses were burned down. Then Scutari took fire in its turn. The heavens were constantly red in some corner or another, and the Tower of the Seraskierat kept its basket and its lantern going up and

down. It seemed as though the demon of fire were shaking his torch over the city. At last everything went out, and the disasters were forgotten with that happy carelessness without which mankind could not possibly go on existing.

CONSTANTINOPLE

SAINT SOPHIA AND THE MOSQUES

IT would be dangerous for a giaour to enter a mosque during Ramazan, even if provided with a firman and protected by khavasses. The preaching of the imams excites increased fervour and fanaticism among the faithful; the excitement of fasting heats empty heads, and the usual toleration due to the progress of civilisation is apt to be forgotten at such times; so I waited until after Ramazan to go on my round.

One usually begins with Saint Sophia, the most ancient, most important monument in Constantinople, which, before it was a mosque, was a Christian church dedicated, not to a female saint as might easily be supposed from its name, but to Divine Wisdom, *Agia Sophia*, personified by the Greeks, and according to them, mother of the three theological virtues.

Seen from the square which extends before Bab-i-Humayoun, — the Augustine Gate, — leaning against

the delicate carvings and the carved inscriptions of the fountain of Achmet III, Saint Sophia presents an incoherent mass of shapeless buildings. The original plan has disappeared under an aggregation of later erections, which have obliterated the general lines and prevent their being easily discerned. Between the counterforts which Amurat III built to support the walls shaken by earthquakes, have clung, like mushrooms in the crevices of an oak, tombs, schools, baths, shops, and stalls.

Above this riot of buildings rises, between four rather heavy minarets, the great dome, supported on walls the courses of which are alternately white and rose, and surrounded by a tiara of windows with trellised openwork. The minarets lack the elegant slenderness of Arab minarets, the dome swells heavily above the disorderly heap of hovels, and the traveller whose imagination had involuntarily been stirred by the magic name of Saint Sophia, which recalls the temple of Ephesus and the Temple of Solomon, experiences a disappointment that fortunately ceases once the interior is seen. It must be said for the Turks that most Christian monuments are just as abominably obstructed, and that many a famous and wonderful

cathedral has its sides covered with excrescences of plaster and boards, and its lace-work spires springing usually from a chaos of loathsome hovels.

To reach the door of the mosque, you follow a sort of lane, bordered by sycamores and turbehs, the painted and gilded stones of which shine faintly through the gratings, and you soon reach, after a few turns, a bronze gate, one of the leaves of which still preserves the imprint of the Greek cross. This lateral door gives access to a vestibule pierced with nine doors. You exchange your boots for slippers, which you must take care to have brought by your dragoman, — for to enter a mosque with boots on would be as great a breach of decency as to keep your hat on in a Catholic church, and it might have more serious consequences.

At the very first step I experienced a singular illusion. It seemed to me that I was in Venice, issuing from the Piazza into the nave of San Marco; only, the proportions had become immeasurably greater, and everything was of colossal dimensions. The pillars rose huge from the pavement covered with matting; the arches, the cupola swelled out like the sphere of heaven; the pendentives, in which the four sacred rivers pour out their mosaic waves, described giant

curves; the tribunes had broadened so as to contain a whole people. San Marco is Saint Sophia in miniature, a reduction of Justinian's basilica on the scale of one inch to the foot. This is not surprising, for Venice, which a narrow sea scarcely separates from Greece, was always familiar with the East, and its architects would naturally endeavour to reproduce the type of the church which had the reputation of being the finest and richest in Christendom. San Marco was begun about the tenth century, and the architect certainly had the opportunity of seeing Saint Sophia in all its integrity and splendour long before it was profaned by Mohammed II, an event which took place in 1453 only.

The present Saint Sophia was built upon the ashes of a temple dedicated to Divine Wisdom by Constantine the Great, and burned down during the rivalries between the Green and Blue factions. Antique as it is, it rests upon a greater antiquity still. Anthemius of Tralles and Isidore of Miletus drew the plans and superintended the building. In order to enrich the new church, the old pagan temples were stripped, and the Christian cupola was supported by the columns of the Temple of Diana at Ephesus, still blackened by

the torch of Erostratus, and by the pillars of the Temple of the Sun at Palmyra, golden with the radiance of their star. From the ruins of Pergamos were brought two enormous urns of porphyry, the lustral waters of which changed into baptismal waters, and later into waters for ablutions. The walls were covered with mosaics of gold and precious stones, and when everything was completed, Justinian could truly exclaim with delight: "Glory be to God, Who considered me worthy to achieve so great a work! O Solomon, I have surpassed thee!"

Although Islam, a foe to plastic art, has stripped Saint Sophia of a large portion of its ornaments, it is still a magnificent temple. The mosaics with gold backgrounds, representing biblical subjects, like those of San Marco, have disappeared under a layer of whitewash; the four giant cherubim of the pendentives alone have been preserved, and their six multi-coloured wings still shimmer upon the scintillating cubes of gilded crystal. But the heads which form the centre of the whirlwinds of feathers have been concealed under large gold roses; the reproduction of the human face being abhorrent to Mussulmans. At the very end of the sanctuary, under the vaulting, the lines of a colossal

figure which the layer of whitewash could not completely hide, are vaguely perceived. The figure is that of the patroness of the church, the image of Divine Wisdom, or more accurately, of Holy Wisdom, *Agia Sophia*, which under this semi-transparent veil witnesses with impassibility the ceremonies of a strange ritual.

The statues have been carried away. The altar, made of some unknown metal, formed, like Corinthian brass, of gold, silver, bronze, iron, and melted precious stones, has been replaced by a slab of red marble which points in the direction of Mecca. Above it hangs an old, very much worn carpet, a dusty rag which has for the Turks the merit of having been one of the four carpets on which Mahomet knelt to say his prayers. Huge green discs given by different sultans hang on the walls; they are inscribed with verses from the Koran or pious maxims written in huge gold letters. A porphyry cartouche contains the names of Allah, Mahomet, and the first four caliphs, Abu Bekr, Omar, Osman, and Ali. The pulpit (*nimbar*) in which the khedib stands to recite the Koran, is placed against one of the pillars supporting the apse. It is reached by very steep steps with two open-work balustrades as

carefully wrought as the finest lace. The khedib ascends these steps, the Book of the Law in the one hand and a sword in the other, as in a conquered mosque.

Cords, from which hang tufts of silk and ostrich-eggs, descend from the vaulting to about ten or twelve feet above the ground. They support hoops of iron wire furnished with lamps, and form chandeliers. X-shaped desks, like those used to hold collections of engravings, are placed here and there, and bear manuscript copies of the Koran. Several of these desks are adorned with elegant niello work in mother-of-pearl and copper. Reed mattings in summer and carpets in winter are placed on the pavement, formed of marble slabs, the veins of which, skilfully brought together, seem to flow like three petrified rivers through the building. There is something very remarkable about these mattings: they are all placed obliquely and in contradiction to the architectural lines. They are like a flooring laid diagonally and not harmonising with the walls that surround it. This peculiarity is easily explained. Saint Sophia was not intended to become a mosque, and consequently is not properly oriented in the direction of Mecca.

Mosques, it will be seen, are, so far as the interior is concerned, not unlike Protestant churches. Art cannot exhibit in them its pomp and its magnificence. Pious inscriptions, a pulpit, desks, mats on which to kneel, are the sole ornamentation allowed. The idea of God alone must fill His temple, and it is great enough to do so. However, I confess that the artistic luxury of Catholicism seems preferable, and the alleged danger of idolatry is to be feared only in the case of barbarous peoples incapable of separating the form from the idea, the image from the thought.

The chief cupola, somewhat heavy in its outline, is, like that of San Marco in Venice, surrounded by several smaller cupolas. It is of immense height, and must have been a resplendent heaven of gold and mosaic before Mussulman lime-wash extinguished its splendours. Even as it is, it produced a deeper impression upon me than the cupola of the dome of Saint Peter's. Byzantine architecture is unquestionably the right form for Catholicism. Gothic architecture itself, however great its religious value, is not so wholly appropriate to it. In spite of degradations of all kinds, Saint Sophia is still much superior to all the Christian churches which I have seen, and I have visited a great

many. Nothing can equal the majesty of these domes, of these galleries, supported by jasper, porphyry, and verd-antique pillars, with their capitals in a curious Corinthian style, in which animals, chimeras, and crosses mingle with foliage. The great art of Greece — degenerate, it is true — is still felt here, and one can understand that when Christ entered that temple Jupiter had just left it.

From the top of the galleries, which are reached by easy slopes like those in the interior of the Giralda and the Campanile, one has a capital general view of the interior of the mosque. When I was there, a few of the faithful, crouching upon reed mats, were devoutly prostrating themselves, two or three women enveloped in ferradjes stood by a door, and a hammal, his load resting on the base of a column, was sleeping soundly. A soft, tender light fell from the high windows, and I could see in the hemicycle opposite the nimbar the glitter of the gold trellis-work of the tribune reserved for the Sultan.

Platforms supported by columns of precious marbles and protected by open-work railings, project from the main walls at every point where the naves intersect. In the side chapels, which are not used in Mussulman

worship, are stored trunks, coffers, and bundles of all kinds, for mosques in the East serve as store-houses. People who travel or are afraid of being robbed at home, place their riches in a mosque under the guard of God, and there is no instance of a single thing having been stolen, for theft would then be complicated by sacrilege. The dust falls upon masses of gold and precious stuffs scarcely covered with a coarse cloth or a piece of old leather. The spider, beloved of the Mussulmans because it spun its web at the entrance of the grotto where Mahomet had taken refuge, peacefully weaves its threads over locks which no one touches.

Around the mosque are grouped *imarets* (hospitals), *medresses* (colleges), baths and kitchens for the poor, for Mussulman life centres around the house of God. Hammals fall asleep under its arcades, where the police never disturb them, — they are the guests of Allah; the faithful pray, the women dream there; the sick are borne to them to be cured or to die. In the East practical life is never separated from religion.

I sought in vain in Saint Sophia the imprint of the bloody hand which Mohammed II, riding into the sanctuary, left upon the wall by way of marking his

taking possession of the place, while the terrified women and virgins had taken refuge by the altar, expecting to be saved by a miracle which did not occur. Is the red mark a historical fact, or merely a legend?

Talking of legends, let me tell one that is current in Constantinople. When the doors of Saint Sophia burst in under the pressure of the barbarous hordes that besieged the city, a priest was at the altar, saying Mass. At the sound of the hoofs of the Tartar horses on the pavement of Justinian, at the howls of the soldiery, at the cries of the terrified faithful, the priest stopped the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, took the sacred vases, and walked towards one of the side naves with an impassible, solemn step. The soldiers, brandishing their cimeters, were about to reach him when he disappeared in a wall which opened and closed again. At first it was supposed that there was some secret issue, some masked door, but there was not; the wall, on being tried, proved to be solid, compact, and impenetrable. The priest had walked through the masonry. Sometimes, it is said, faint chants are heard issuing from within the wall. It is the priest, still alive, like Barbarossa in his cavern at Kiefhausen, who is sleepily droning his interrupted liturgy. When Saint Sophia

shall be restored to Christian worship, the wall will open of itself and the priest, emerging from his retreat, will finish at the altar the Mass begun four hundred years ago.

On leaving Saint Sophia I visited a few mosques. That of Sultan Achmet, situated near the Atmeïdan, is one of the most remarkable. It has the peculiarity of possessing six minarets, which has given it in Turkish the name Alti Minareli Djami. I mention this because the fact gave rise during the building to a difference between the Sultan and the scherif at Mecca. The scherif charged the Sultan with impiety and sacrilegious pride, for no temple in Islam must equal in splendour the holy Kaaba, which had the same number of minarets. The work was interrupted, and the mosque ran the risk of never being finished, when Sultan Achmet, like a clever man, hit upon an ingenious subterfuge to silence the fanatical iman: he caused a seventh minaret to be built at the Kaaba.

The high dome of the mosque of Achmet swells majestically amid several other smaller domes between its six square minarets encircled by trellised balconies wrought like bracelets. It is approached by a court surrounded by columns with black and white capitals and

bronze bases, that support arcades forming a quadruple cloister or portico. In the centre of the court rises an exceedingly ornate fountain covered with bloom and complicated arabesques, scrolls, and knots, and covered with a cage of gilded trellis, no doubt in order to protect the purity of the water which is intended for ablutions. The style of the whole of the building is noble, pure, and recalls the finest time of Arab art, although the building is not earlier than the beginning of the seventeenth century.

A pair of bronze gates, reached by steps, leads into the interior of the mosque. The most striking things seen first are the four huge pillars, or rather, the four fluted towers that bear the weight of the principal cupola. These pillars, the capitals of which are carved in the form of stalactites, are girdled half way up with a band covered with inscriptions in Turkish letters. They have a very striking appearance of robust majesty and indescribable power.

Verses from the Koran run round the cupolas, the domes, and the cornices. This motive of ornamentation has been borrowed from the Alhambra, and Arabic writing, with its characters like the patterns of cashmere shawls, lends itself admirably to it. Keystones

alternately black and white border the combings of the arches. The mirâhb, which indicates the direction of Mecca and in which rests the Holy Book, is incrusted with alabaster, agate, and jasper; there is even set in it, it is said, a fragment of the black stone of the Kaaba, a relic as precious to Mussulmans as a piece of the True Cross to Christians. It is in this mosque that is preserved the standard of the Prophet, which is displayed, like the oriflamme under the old French monarchy, on solemn and supreme occasions only. Mahmoud had it brought forth when, surrounded by the imams, he announced to the prostrate people the sentence of death passed against the Janissaries.

A nimbar with its conical sounding-board, *mastaches* or platforms, supported by slender columns from which the muezzins call the believers to prayer, chandeliers adorned with crystal balls and ostrich-eggs complete the ornamentation, which is the same in every mosque. As in Saint Sophia, under the arches of the side chapels are heaped up coffers, boxes, and parcels, left there in deposit under the divine protection by pious Mussulmans.

Near the mosque is the turbeh or tomb of Achmet the glorious Padisha, who sleeps in this funeral chapel

under his painted bier covered with the most precious stuffs of Persia and India, — at his head his turban, with an aigrette of gems; at his feet two enormous candles as big as ship's masts. Some thirty coffins of smaller dimensions surround it. They are those of his children and his favourite wives, who accompany him in death as in life. Within a cupboard sparkle and gleam his sabres, kandjars, and weapons studded with diamonds, sapphires, and rubies.

I need not now speak at any length of the mosque of Sultan Bayezid, which differs from this one only in some small architectural details that could be more readily indicated in a pencil sketch than in a written one. In the interior there are some fine pillars of jasper and African porphyry. Above its cloister hover continually swarms of pigeons as tame as those on the Piazza San Marco. A good old Turk stands under the Arcades with bags of vetches or millet. You buy some from him and scatter it in handfuls. Then from the domes, minarets, cornices, and capitals swoop down in many-coloured flocks thousands of doves, which light at your feet, rest on your shoulders, and slap your face with their wings. You find yourself all of a sudden the centre of a feathered waterspout. Presently there

is not a grain of millet left on the flags, and the birds, having satisfied their hunger, go back to their aerial perch, awaiting another piece of good fortune. These pigeons are the descendants of two wood-pigeons which Sultan Bayezid once purchased of a poor woman who begged for alms, and which he presented to the mosque.

As usual with the founders of mosques, Bayezid has his turbeh near by. There he sleeps, covered with a gold and silver carpet; under his head, with a humility worthy of a Christian, a brick made of the dust collected from his clothes and shoes; for in the Koran, there is a line which runs: "He who has become covered with dust while travelling in the paths of Allah need not fear the fires of hell."

I shall not carry farther this account of mosques, for, with very slight differences, they all resemble each other. I shall merely mention that of Souleïman, one of the most perfect from an architectural point of view, close by which is the turbeh wherein rest by the side of Souleïman I the remains of the famous Roxelana under a bier covered with cashmere. Not far from this mosque there is a porphyry sarcophagus said to be that of Constantine.

CONSTANTINOPLE

THE SERAGLIO

WHEN the Sultan inhabits one of his summer palaces, it is possible, if provided with a firman, to visit the interior of the Seraglio; but do not let that name suggest the paradise of Mahomet. "Seraglio" is a generic word which means *palace*, quite distinct from the harem, the dwelling of the women, the mysterious place into which no profane enters, even when the houris are absent. Ten or twelve people usually collect for the visit, which involves frequent bakshîsh, amounting altogether to not less than one hundred and fifty or two hundred francs. A dragoman precedes the company and settles troublesome details with the keepers of the doors. Undoubtedly he swindles you, but as you do not know Turkish, you have to submit. One must take care to bring slippers, for if in France one uncovers on entering a respectable place, in Turkey you take off your shoes, which is perhaps more rational, for you must leave at the threshold the dust of your feet.

THE SERAGLIO

The Seraglio, or Seraï, as the Turks call it, fills up with its irregular buildings the triangular point laved on the one side by the Sea of Marmora and on the other by the Golden Horn. It is surrounded by a crenellated wall which covers a vast space of ground. A sea wall a few feet wide runs along these two sides. The current runs with extraordinary rapidity; the blue waters surge and boil as if in a furnace, and sparkle brilliantly in the sun. They are remarkably transparent, and one can clearly see the bottom of green rocks or white sand through a maze of reflected rays. Boats can ascend these rapids only by being towed.

Above the weatherworn walls, in which are many stones drawn from antique buildings, rise buildings the windows of which are closed by very fine trellis-work, kiosks in Chinese or rococo style, clumps of pointed cypresses and of plane-trees. Over all weighs down a feeling of solitude and abandonment. It is hard to believe that behind these gloomy walls lives the glorious Caliph, the all-powerful Lord of Islam.

The Seraglio is entered by a gate of very simple architecture, guarded by a few soldiers. Under this gate, in magnificent mahogany closets provided with locks, are rows of muskets arranged in perfect order.

Having passed through the gate, our little band, preceded by an officer of the palace, a khavass, and the dragoman, traversed a sort of hilly, uncultivated garden planted with enormous cypress-trees like a cemetery without tombstones, and we soon reached the entrance to the apartments.

At the request of the dragoman, each person put on slippers, and we ascended a wooden staircase in no wise monumental. In Northern countries, where Arab tales have spread an exaggerated idea of Oriental magnificence, the coolest minds cannot help fancying fairy architecture with pillars of lapis-lazuli, golden capitals, foliage of emeralds and rubies, fountains of rock-crystal, in which sparkle waters like quicksilver. The Turkish style is confounded with the Arab style. There is no relation whatever between the two, and an Alhambra is imagined when in reality there is nothing more than well-aired kiosks and very simply ornamented rooms.

The first hall we entered is circular in shape and pierced with numerous trellised windows. A divan runs all round it, the walls and ceiling are adorned with gildings and black arabesques. Black curtains and a valance cut out like a lambrequin and running along

the cornice complete the decoration. A matting in very fine esparto, which no doubt in winter is replaced by soft Smyrna carpets, covers the floor. The second hall is painted in grisaille distemper in the Italian manner. The third is decorated with landscapes, mirrors, blue hangings, and a clock with rayed dial. On the walls of the fourth are sentences written in Mahmoud's own hand, for he was a skilful caligraphist and, like all Orientals, was proud of this talent; a pardonable pride, for the writing, complicated by the curves and ligatures and interlacings, is closely akin to drawing. After having traversed these halls, a smaller room is reached.

Two pastels by Michel Bouquet are the sole artistic works which attract the glance in this hall, marked by the severe bareness of Islam. The one represents "The Port of Bucharest," the other "A View of Constantinople" taken from the Maiden's Tower, without figures of course. A clock with a mechanical picture, representing Seraglio Point with caïques and vessels, which the mechanism causes to pitch and roll, excites the admiration of the debonair Turks and the smiles of the giaours; for such a clock would be more in its place in the dining-room of a retired grocer than in the

mysterious abode of the Padisha. By way of compensation the same room contains a closet, the curtains of which, drawn back, allow to blaze out with gleam of gold and gems, the real luxury of the Orient. It is a treasury in no wise inferior to that of the Tower of London. It is customary that each sultan should bequeath to this collection some object which he has used more particularly. Nearly all have given weapons. There are kandjars with hilts rough with diamonds and rubies, damask blades in silver sheaths bossed with reliefs, bluish blades covered with Arabic inscriptions in golden letters, maces richly inlaid with niello work, pistols the butts of which disappear under quantities of pearls, corals and gems. Sultan Mahmoud, as a poet and a caligraphist, gave his inkstand, a mass of gold covered with diamonds. Through a sort of civilised coquetry, he sought to introduce a thought amid these instruments of brutal force and to show that the brain is as powerful as the arm. In this cabinet is to be noticed a curious Turkish chimney, made of honeycomb-work, like the stalactites that hang from the ceilings of the Alhambra.

Beyond is a gallery where the odalisques play and exercise under the care of eunuchs, but so sacred a

place is closed to the profane, even when the birds have flown. A little farther on rise the cupolas constellated with great crystal panes that cover the baths, decorated with alabaster columns and marble overlayings, which we had to be satisfied with admiring from the outside.

We put on our shoes again at the door by which we had entered, and continued our visit. We first proceeded by a garden filled with flower-beds with wooden borders, after the old French fashion; then we traversed courts surrounded by a cloister with Moorish arcades which contained the lodgings and the classrooms of the icoglans or Seraglio pages, and reached the kiosk, or pavilion, containing the library. We ascended to it by a sort of stair with a marble balustrade of exquisite tracery.

The door of the library is a marvel. Never did Arab genius trace upon bronze a more prodigious interlacing of lines, angles, stars, mingling and intertwining in the most complicated fashion in a geometrical maze. A photograph alone could reproduce this fairy ornamentation. A draughtsman desirous of imitating conscientiously with his pencil these inextricable meanders would go crazy after spending a lifetime on the work.

Within are arranged in cedar cases Arab manuscripts, the edges turned towards the spectator, a peculiar arrangement which I had already noticed in the Escorial Library, and which the Spaniards no doubt borrowed from the Moors. Here we were shown on a great parchment roll a sort of genealogical tree containing in oval miniatures the portraits of all the Sultans, done in water-colours. These portraits, it is said, are authentic, which it is hard to believe. They represent pale, black-bearded faces, of uniform type, and the costume is that of the Turks of Molière and Racine, who were more accurate in this respect than is generally believed.

The library having been visited, we were shown into a kiosk in the Arab style, reached by marble steps. Here shone in all its splendour the old Oriental magnificence, of which the apartments we had already traversed presented no trace. The greater part of the room is filled with a throne in the shape of a divan, or bed, with a baldacchino supported by hexagonal pillars of copper, studded with garnets, topazes, emeralds, and other stones *en cabochon*, for the Turks formerly did not cut gems. Horse-tails hang at the four corners from great golden balls surmounted by crescents. This

throne, which is indeed made to be the seat of Caliphs, is exceedingly rich, elegant, and regal.

Barbarians alone possess the secret of this marvellous goldsmith-work, and the feeling for ornament seems to diminish, I do not know why, the more civilisation develops. Without indulging in the mania of an antiquary, it must be confessed that the older the architecture or the weapon, the more perfect is the taste and the more exquisite the work. The modern world, too much taken up with thought, has no longer an accurate notion of form.

A few gleams of light, falling from a half-opened window, sparkled and gleamed upon the chasings and the gems. Tiles of Arab ware were arranged in shimmering symmetrical designs on the lower part of the walls as in the halls of the Alhambra at Granada; the ceiling was formed of rods of silver-gilt, curiously chased, making compartments and roses. In the corner, in the shadow, gleamed a curious Turkish chimney formed in the shape of a niche, and intended to hold a *brasero;* it has a sort of seven-sided, little conical dome of copper, cut out and traceried and inlaid with the most elegant designs of Arab art, for a hood. Some Gothic reliquaries alone can give an idea of this exquisite work.

Opposite the divan opens a window, or rather a loop-hole, fitted with a close gilded grating. It was outside this sort of wicket that ambassadors formerly stood, their communications being transmitted by intermediaries to the Padisha, cross-legged, motionless as an idol under his dais of silver-gilt and gems, between his two symbolical turbans. They could scarcely see through the golden grating the fixed eyes of the magnificent Sultan shining like stars in the shadow; but that was enough for giaours; the shadow of God could not reveal itself more fully to dogs of Christians.

The exterior is no less remarkable. A great projecting roof covers the building, marble columns support the arcades with ribbing and roses; a slab of verd-antique bearing an Arab inscription, forms the threshold of the door, the lintel of which is very low; an architectural arrangement intended, it is said, to compel the vassals and recalcitrant tributaries admitted to the presence of the Grand Seigneur to bow their heads, — a rather jesuitical trick of etiquette, which a Persian envoy funnily eluded by walking in backwards, as one enters a Venetian gondola.

In the description of the Beïram I spoke at length of the portico under which takes place the ceremony,

so I shall not return to it, and will continue my walk somewhat at haphazard, naming things as I come to them. It is difficult to give a methodical account of buildings of different periods and styles, erected without any preconceived plan, according to the caprices and needs of the moment, separated by empty spaces shaded here and there by cypresses, sycamores, and old plane-trees of monstrous size.

From the centre of a clump of trees rises a fluted pillar with Corinthian capital, very effective and called after Theodosius. I mention it because the number of Byzantine ruins in Constantinople is very small. The old city has disappeared, leaving scarcely any traces. The rich palaces of the Greek dynasty of the Palaiologoi and the Komnenoi have vanished; their marble and porphyry columns were utilised in the building of mosques, and their foundations, covered by the frail Mussulman shanties, have little by little been obliterated by conflagrations. Sometimes there is to be seen inserted in a wall a capital or a fragment of a broken torso, but nothing which has preserved its original form. The ground itself must be explored in order to find any of the *débris* of ancient Byzantium.

The interior of Saint Irenæus is filled with muskets, sabres, and pistols of modern models, arranged with a military symmetry that our own museum of artillery would approve; but this brilliant decoration, which greatly delights the Turks, and of which they are very proud, does not seem at all wonderful to a European traveller. A much more interesting collection is that of the historical weapons preserved in a tribune transformed into a gallery at the end of the apse. There we were shown the sword of Mohammed II, a straight blade on which an Arab inscription in gold letters gleams upon the blue damascening; an armlet inlaid with gold and constellated with two discs of gems that belonged to Tamerlane; an iron sword, much dinted, with a cross-hilt, formerly belonging to Scanderberg the athletic hero. In glass cases are seen the keys of conquered cities; symbolical keys just like jewels, damascened with gold and silver.

In the vestibule are heaped up the kettle-drums and pans of the Janissaries; those pans which, when they were upset, made the Sultan tremble and turn pale within the depths of his harem. Quantities of old halberds, of cases of arms, of great cannon, of curiously shaped culverins, recall Turkish strategy before the

reform of Mahmoud; a useful reform no doubt, but regrettable from the picturesque point of view.

The stables, at which I cast a glance, have nothing remarkable, and contained at that time quite ordinary animals, the Sultan having taken his favourite steeds with him. For the matter of that, the Turks are not as fond of horses as the Arabs, although they do like them and have some very fine animals.

That is about all a stranger can see in the Seraglio. No profane glance sullies the mysterious places, the secret kiosks, the inner retreats. The Seraglio, like every Mussulman's house, has its selamlik. It is for the harem that are reserved the refinements of voluptuous luxury, — the cashmere divans, the Persian carpets, the china vases, the golden perfume-boxes, the lacquered cabinets, the mother-of-pearl tables, the cedar ceilings with painted and gilded compartments, the marble fountains, the jasper columns. The dwelling of the men is, so to speak, merely the vestibule to the dwelling of the women, a guard-room interposed between exterior and interior life.

I greatly regretted that I could not enter a wonderful bathroom, the fulfilment of a perfect Oriental dream, of which my friend Maxime Ducamp has given a

splendid description; but on this occasion the guardian showed himself more ungracious, or perhaps stricter orders had been issued. If the houris take vapor baths in paradise, it must be in a bathroom like that, which is a gem of Mussulman architecture.

Fairly wearied by a visit during which I had taken off and put on my shoes six or eight times, I left the Seraglio by the Augustine Gate (Bab-i-Humayoun), and leaving my companions, sat down on the outer bench of a little café, whence, while eating Scutari grapes, I gazed upon the monumental gate surmounted by a dwelling, with its high Moorish arcade, its four pillars, its marble cartouche with an inscription in gold letters, and its two niches in which heads were exposed after being cut off; among others, that of Ali Tepelin, Pacha of Janina, figured there on a silver dish.

I also examined closely the charming fountain of Achmet III, which I glanced at on my way to Saint Sophia. Bar the fountain at Top Khaneh it is the most remarkable in Constantinople, which possesses so many and such beautiful ones. There is nothing comparable in the way of elegance to its roof, curved up like the toe of a Turkish shoe, embroidered with filigree carvings, dotted with capricious finials; with

the pieces of stone lace, the stalactite niches, the arabesques that frame in verses composed by the poet-sultan, the slender pillars, the fantastic capitals, the roses gracefully starred, the cornices foliated and fluted, — a charming maze of ornament, a happy mingling of Arab and Turkish art.

CONSTANTINOPLE

THE ATMEÏDAN

THE Atmeïdan, which extends behind the Seraglio, is the ancient Hippodrome. The Turkish word has exactly the same meaning as the Greek and means the arena for horses. It is a vast square, bordered on one side by the mosque of Sultan Achmet, pierced with grated windows, and on the other sides by ruins or by incoherent buildings. On the axis of the square rise the obelisk of Theodosius, the Serpentine Column, and the Walled Pyramid, — faint vestiges of the splendours which formerly filled this wondrous place. These ruins are about all that is left on the surface of the ground of the marvels of ancient Byzantium. The Augusteon, the Sigma, the Octagon, the Thermæ of Xeuxippus, of Achilles, of Honorius, the Golden Mile-stone, the Porticos of the Forum, — all have vanished under the mantle of dust and forgetfulness that enshrouds dead cities. The work of time was hastened by the depredations of the Barbarians, Latin, French, Turk, and even Greek;

every successive invasion did more damage. Incredible indeed is the blind fury of destruction and the stupid hatred of stones. It must be essential to human nature, for the same fact recurs at every epoch. It seems as though a masterpiece offends the eye of a barbarian, as light does the eye of an owl. The radiance of thought troubles him without his knowing very well why, and he puts it out. Religions also willingly destroy with the one hand while they build with the other, and many religions have made their home in Constantinople. Christianity broke down the pagan monuments, Islam the Christian monuments; perhaps the mosques themselves will disappear in their turn before a new worship.

It must have been a splendid spectacle when the multitude, dazzling with gold, purple, and gems, swarmed under the porticos that surround the Hippodrome, and became enthusiastic alternately for the Green and the Blue drivers, whose rivalry agitated the empire and caused seditions. The golden quadrigæ drawn by thorough-bred horses sent flying under their dazzling wheels the azure and vermilion sand with which, by a refinement of luxury, the Hippodrome was covered, and the Emperor bent from the top of

his palace terrace to applaud his favourite colour. The Blues — if I may say so of Byzantine drivers — were the Tories; the Greens, Whigs; for politics entered into these rivalries of the circus. The Greens even tried to elect an emperor to dethrone Justinian, and it took Belisarius and an army corps to put down the revolt.

Within the Hippodrome, as within an open-air mosque, were collected the spoils of antiquity; a population of statues, numerous enough to fill a city, rose on the attics and the pedestals, — everywhere marbles and bronzes. The horses of Lysippus, the statues of the Emperor Augustus and the other emperors, of Diana, Juno, Pallas, Helen, Paris, Hercules, supreme in majesty, superhuman in beauty, — all the great art of Greece and Rome seemed to have sought a final refuge there. The bronze horses of Corinth, carried away by the Venetians, now prance over the gates of San Marco; the images of the gods and goddesses, barbarously melted down, have been scattered in the shape of bullion.

The Obelisk of Theodosius is the best preserved of the three monuments standing in the Hippodrome. It is a monolith of rose granite of Syêne, nearly sixty feet

in height by six in breadth, gradually growing smaller up to the point. A single perpendicular line of hieroglyphs, sharply cut in, marks each of the four faces. As I am not a Champollion, I cannot tell you the meaning of these mysterious emblems, which are no doubt a dedication to some Pharaoh or other.

Whence came this huge block? From Heliopolis, say the scholars; but it does not appear to me to belong to the oldest Egyptian antiquity. It may not be more than three thousand years old, which is very young for an obelisk; and indeed, its golden, rosy granite is scarcely darkened by a few gray tints. The monolith does not rest directly on the pedestal, being separated from it by four bronze cubes. The marble pedestal is covered with rather barbarous and worn *bassi-relievi*, so that it is difficult to make out the subjects represented, — triumphs or apotheoses of Justinian and his family. The stiffness of the attitudes, the bad drawing, and the lack of expression of the faces, the crowding of the personages without any composition or perspective, are characteristic of a period of decadence. The remembrance of neighbouring Greece is already lost in these shapeless attempts. Other *bassi-relievi*, half concealed by the filling up of

the soil, but known from the descriptions of former writers, represent the methods employed to erect the obelisk. Curiously enough, similar *bassi-relievi* are to be seen upon the pedestal of the obelisk at Luxor, erected on the Place de la Concorde by the engineer Lebas. Greek and Latin inscriptions show that the obelisk, lying on the ground, was raised in thirty-two days by Proclus, Prefect of the Prætoriate, by order of Theodosius, and they celebrate the virtues of the magnanimous emperor. The Egyptian block and the Lower Empire pedestal are in happy harmony and produce the finest effect; only, the obelisk is as sharp on the edges as if it had been just carved out of granite, while the pedestal, thirteen hundred years younger, is already much worn.

Not far from the obelisk squirms the Serpent Column, twisted and intertwined, ascending spirally like the flutings of a Salomonic column. The three silver-crested heads of the serpents which formed the capital have vanished. One tradition states that Mohammed II, riding past in the Hippodrome, cut them down with one blow of his damask blade or mace, in the performance of one of those feats of strength which Sultans were fond of. According to other traditions, he cut off

one only of the three heads; the second and third were broken for the value of the bronze; this is not surprising when the trouble the Barbarians took to extract the iron clasps from the blocks of the Coliseum is recalled. To destroy a palace in order to secure a nail is characteristic of savages. This column, which rises about nine feet from the ground, but the base of which has sunk, seems rather slender in the centre of the vast space. It is said to be of noble origin. According to antiquaries these interlaced serpents supported in the temple at Delphi the golden tripod presented by grateful Greece to Phœbus Apollo, the saving god, after the battle of Platæa won against Xerxes. Constantine, it is said, caused the Serpent Column to be carried from Delphi to his new city. A tradition less generally received, but much more probable in my opinion, if the small artistic worth of the monument is taken into account, maintains that it is only a talisman manufactured by Apollonius of Thyane with which to charm serpents. The reader is free to choose between these two accounts.

As to the Walled Pyramid of Constantine Porphyrogenetes, which was reckoned the eighth wonder of the world, — at a time, it is true, when the most hyper-

bolical exaggeration was common, — it is now only a mass of masonry, a shapeless heap of stones, worn by rain, burned by sunshine, full of dust and cobwebs, full of cracks, decaying in every part and absolutely insignificant in every way from the artistic point of view. This armature of masonry was formerly overlaid with great plates of gilded bronze bossed with *bassi-relievi* and ornaments which, owing to the weight and the worth of the metal, were bound to excite the cupidity of spoilers; and indeed the Pyramid of Constantine was very soon stripped of its splendid covering, and nothing was left but a blackened block eighty feet high. This golden pyramid, which the Paroxysts compared to the Colossus of Rhodes, must have shone superbly under the blue sky of Constantinople among the splendid monuments of antique art, above the colonnades of the circus filled with spectators in sumptuous dresses; but in order to imagine this, one has in thought to perform a complete work of restoration.

The Turks formerly used to race their horses and practise djerrid-throwing on this square, a turf ready prepared for equestrian diversions. The reform and the introduction of European tactics have caused the giving up of this javelin game, which is better suited

to the free horsemen of the desert than to regiments of regular cavalry taught in accordance with the methods of the school of Saumur.

At the end of the Atmeïdan is the Etmeïdan (flesh market). It is a redoubtable and gloomy place, in spite of the sun which floods it with its brilliant rays. On looking at the half-ruined mosque and the walls still scarred by fire, one can easily see the marks of the cannon-balls. The soil, now so white and powdery, has been deeply dyed with blood. It was on the Etmeïdan that took place the massacre of the Janissaries, of which Champmartin sent to the Salon so fiercely Romanticist a painting. The great massacre had a worthy frame.

Sultan Mahmoud, feeling with the instinct of genius that the Empire was decadent, thought that he might save it by providing it with weapons equal to those of Christian realms, and he desired to have his troops drilled by Egyptian officers trained to European tactics. This very simple and wise reform provoked insurmountable objections among the Janissaries; their gray moustaches bristled with indignation; the fanatics shouted "Profanity!" and called upon Allah and Mahomet; the Commander of the Faithful was very

nearly charged with being a giaour because of his obstinacy in introducing the diabolical manœuvres which neither Mohammed II nor Souleïman I had needed to conquer and to retain their conquests.

Happily Mahmoud was a resolute man and not easily intimidated; he had resolved to conquer or die in the struggle. The insolence of the Janissaries, equal to that of the Prætorians and the Strelitzes, could no longer be borne, and their perpetual seditions endangered the throne which they pretended to defend. An opportunity soon occurred. An Egyptian drill-master struck a recalcitrant or purposely careless Turkish soldier. Immediately the indignant Janissaries espoused their comrade's cause, overset their pans in sign of revolt, and threatened to set fire to the four corners of the city. This was, as is well known, their fashion of protesting and testifying their discontent. They crowded before the palace of Kosreu Pasha, their Aga, calling loudly for the head of the Grand Vizier and the muphti who had approved the impious reforms of Mahmoud; but they had not to do this time with one of those nerveless sultans ready to appease howling sedition by casting to it a few heads by way of prey.

On hearing of the insurrection, Sultan Mahmoud made all speed from Beshicktash, where he then was, collected the troops that had remained faithful, called together the ulemas, and took from the Mosque of Achmet near the Hippodrome the standard of the Prophet, which is displayed only when the Empire is in danger. Every true Mussulman is then bound to support the Commander of the Faithful, for it is a holy war. The destruction of the Janissaries was settled upon.

The Janissaries had intrenched themselves on the Etmeïdan close to their barracks. Mahmoud's regular troops occupied the adjacent streets with cannon pointed at the square. The intrepid Sultan rode several times in front of the insurgents, braving a thousand deaths, and calling upon them to disperse; the crisis was being prolonged, a moment of hesitation might cause a failure. A devoted officer, Kara Dyehennin, fired his pistol at the priming of a cannon, which exploded, and the grape cut a bloody line through the first ranks of the rebels. The action was begun. The artillery thundered on all sides, a steady musketry fire scattered bullets like hail upon the dense masses of the bewildered Janissaries, and the battle soon turned into a massacre. It was a perfect butchery, no quarter was given; the bar-

racks where the flying Janissaries had intrenched themselves, were set on fire, and those who had escaped the sword perished in the flames. The number of the dead is variously estimated: by some it is stated at six thousand, by others at twenty thousand, by others again at a still higher figure. The bodies were thrown into the sea, and for months the fishes, fed on human flesh, were unfit for human food.

Sultan Mahmoud's vengeance was not even then satisfied. On walking through the Field of the Dead at Pera and at Scutari, there are to be seen many monuments with their apexes broken off, the marble turbans lying at their feet, like headless men. These are the tombs of former Janissaries, whom death itself could not protect from the imperial wrath.

Was this frightful extermination wise or unwise from a political point of view? Did not Mahmoud, by destroying this great body, destroy one of the living forces of the state, one of the principles of Turkish nationality? Will the material progress accomplished sufficiently replace the old barbaric energy? In the twilight which marks the decline of empires, is the light of reason better than the torch of fanaticism? No one can yet answer the question.

THE ATMEÏDAN

At some distance from the Hippodrome, in the centre of a space covered with the débris of fires, opens on the slope of a hillock like a black mouth, the entrance to a dried-up Byzantine cistern. It is reached by a wooden staircase. The Turks call it Ben Bir Direck, the Thousand and One Columns, although in reality it has only two hundred and twenty-four. The white marble columns end in coarse capitals in a barbarous Corinthian style blocked out or worn away, supporting semicircular arches, and their long lines form several naves. Three or four feet from the base they swell out. This was the point reached by the waters, and the swelling formed the apparent base when the reservoir was full. The remainder of the column then figured a submerged pile. The ground has been raised by the dust of centuries, the falling pieces from the vaulting and detritus of all kinds, for the cistern must originally have been much deeper. One can make out faintly upon the capitals mysterious signs, Byzantine hieroglyphs, the meaning of which is lost. The epsilon and the phi, often repeated, are translated, "*Euge, Philoxena.*" In point of fact, the cistern was for the use of strangers. It was built by Constantine, whose monogram is imprinted on the great Roman

bricks of the vaulting and of the columns. Now a silk manufactory has been established in it by Jews and Armenians. The wheels and reels were creaking under the arcades of Constantine, and the sound of the looms recalled the rippling of the vanished waters. The cavern, lighted by a pale half-light struggling with deep shadows, is icy cold, and it was with a lively feeling of pleasure that I emerged from this abyss into the warm light of the sun, pitying with all my heart the poor workmen toiling underground like gnomes or kobolds.

At a short distance from this cistern, behind Saint Sophia, there is another called Yeri Batan Seraï (the Underground Palace). This one does not contain a silk factory like Ben Bir Direck. Even as you enter, a damp, penetrating vapour, full of influenza, pneumonia, and lumbago wraps you in its damp mantle. A black water, streaked with a few spangles and livid eddies, laves the mouldy columns and extends under the dark arcades to a depth which the eye cannot sound and which the light of the torches itself does not reach. It is most sinister and terrifying. The Turks pretend that djinns, ghouls, and afrites held their sabbath in this lugubrious palace, and still flap their bats' wings wet

with the tears of the vaulting. Formerly this subterranean sea was traversed in boats. The trip must have been like one on the infernal river in Charon's bark. Some boats, no doubt carried away by interior currents towards some abyss, never returned from this gloomy expedition, which is now forbidden and which, besides, had it been allowed, I felt in no wise tempted to try.

THE ELBICEÏ ATIKA

ON the Atmeïdan, opposite the Mosque of Achmet, rises near the Mekter Khadi (Tent Warehouse) a Turkish building of fine appearance. It is the Elbiceï Atika, the Museum of the Janissaries. This museum, recently opened to the public, is approached by a courtyard filled with fresh verdure and where ripples the water of a fountain in a marble basin. If there were not at the door an official whose business it is to charge you for admission, you might fancy yourself within the palace of a bey. Most pleasantly calm is this retrospective vestiary of the old Turkish empire. The shade and silence of the past fill this peaceful asylum with their soft tints; on setting foot within the Elbiceï Atika one retrogrades from the present into history.

On the landing-place, as a sign or as a sentinel, stands a *yenitcheri kollouk neferi*, that is, a Janissary of the guard. In the days when the Janissaries were powerful, no one could pass a post of those undisci-

plined troops without suffering more or less severely from extortion. One had to pay or be beaten and bespattered with mud and insults.

A manikin, the head and hands of which are carved of wood and coloured not unskilfully, wears the old Janissary costume. This breach of Mussulman custom, which forbids any reproduction of the human face, is very remarkable, and proves that religious prejudices are being weakened by contact with Christian civilisation. This museum, which holds nearly one hundred and forty figures, would have been impossible formerly; now it shocks no one, and often an old Janissary who escaped the massacre comes and dreams there before the garments of his former companions in arms, and sighs as he thinks of the good old times that have gone by.

This yenitcheri kollouk neferi looks like a jolly rascal; a sort of kindly ferociousness animates his strongly marked features, which are still further accentuated by a heavy moustache. It is plain that he could joke while committing murder, and there is in his whole attitude the disdainful nonchalance of a privileged corps which thinks it may do whatever it pleases. His legs crossed, he plays on a *louta*, a sort of three-stringed

guitar, to while away the hours of sentry duty. He wears a red tarbousch, around which is rolled in turban form a piece of common linen; a brown jacket, the ends of which are fastened by a sash; and full blue cloth trousers. In his sash, which fulfils the double duty of an arsenal and a pocket, he has crowded handkerchief, napkin, and tobacco pouch by the side of bristling daggers, yataghans, and pistols. This habit of putting everything into the belt is common to the Spaniards and the Orientals. I remember seeing at Seville a duel with knives in which the only victim was a melon worn in the sash of one of the duellists.

In front of the yenitcheri is a little table covered with old Turkish coins of the smaller denominations, aspres, paras, piastres, which have become rare, the whole representing the tax levied upon the civilians of Constantinople. Near him some golden ears of corn are grilling on a fire to form the meal with which Oriental frugality is satisfied. I pass him without fear, for he is a wooden soldier, and I have paid ten piastres at the outer door.

Opposite this collector Janissary stand some soldiers of the same corps in very similar costumes. Having crossed the threshold, I entered an oblong hall, ill

lighted and filled with great glass cases containing manikins dressed with perfect care and scrupulous accuracy. Here are collected, like types of antediluvian animals in a natural history museum, the individuals and races suppressed by Mahmoud's *coup d'état*. Here lives again, with a dead, motionless life, the fantastic and chimerical Turkey of vast trousers, dolmans edged with cat-skins, high, conical caps, jackets with a sun embroidered on the back, extravagant barbaric weapons, — the Turkey of the *mamamouchis*, of melodramas and fairy tales. It is only twenty-seven years since the massacre of the Janissaries took place, yet it seems as though it were a hundred, so radical is the change that has been worked. By the violent will of the reformer, the old national forms have been destroyed, and almost contemporary costumes have become historical antiquities.

When looking through the glass at these moustached or bearded faces, with their fixed stare, and their colours imitating life, lighted by a faint side-light, one feels a strange sensation, a sort of indefinable uneasiness. The crude reality, different from that of art, is troublous on account of the very illusion it produces; in seeking a transition from the statue to the living being,

the cadaver has been hit upon. Those painted faces in which no muscle moves end by frightening you, like the rouged dead who are carried along with uncovered face. I can quite understand the terror masks inspire in children. These long files of queer beings, preserving the stiff, constrained attitudes in which they have been put, resemble the people petrified by the vengeance of a magician told of in the Eastern tale. The only one lacking is the tall, white-bearded old man, the one living being in the dead city, who reads the Koran on the stone bench at the entrance to the town. He may be represented, if you like, — in prosaic fashion, it is true, — by the man who collects the entrance fees at the door.

I cannot describe separately the one hundred and forty figures enclosed in the glass cases on the two stories. Many have but imperceptible differences in the cut and colour of their dress, and to describe them properly I should have to fill my pages with innumerable Turkish words of repellent orthography and difficult to read. Besides, the work has been done admirably and accurately by George Noguès, the son of the editor-in-chief of the French newspaper at Constantinople, and with an amount of care which a

traveller, who has to see things quickly, cannot bring to the task.

The Elbiceï Atika is composed chiefly of costumes of the former household of the Grand Seignior and the different uniforms of the Janissaries. There are also some manikins of artisans dressed in the old fashion, but these are few in number.

The first functionary of a seraglio is naturally the Chief of the Eunuchs, the Kislar Agassi. The one enclosed in the glass cases of the Elbiceï Atika as a specimen of his class, is most splendidly dressed in a state pelisse of brocade with a flowered pattern, worn over an inner tunic of red silk, and very full trousers held in at the waist by a cashmere sash. He wears a red turban with a twisted muslin band, and yellow morocco boots.

The Grand Vizier, or Sadrazam, has a singularly shaped turban: the upper portion is conical and the lower ribbed in four places; below that are rows of muslin held in and crossed diagonally by a narrow gold band. Like the Chief of the Eunuchs he wears a state pelisse (*kurkla caftan*) of brocade with a red and green flowered pattern. From his cashmere sash projects the carved handle of his kandjar, rough with

gems. The Sheik ul Islam and the Kapoudan Pacha are dressed very much in the same way save as regards the turban, which consists of a fez with a piece of red stuff wound around it.

The Seliktar Agassi, or Chief of the Sword-bearers, has a thoroughly sacerdotal and Byzantine look in his splendidly strange costume. His turban, curiously constructed, gives him a vague resemblance to a Pharaoh wearing the *pschent*, and may have been copied from some hieroglyphic panel. His gold brocade robe with silver flowered patterns, cut in the shape of a dalmatic, recalls a priest's chasuble. The Sultan's sabre, respectfully enclosed in a sheath of violet satin, rests on his shoulder. Next to him is a figure dressed in a black gown (*djubbé*), the sleeves split and embroidered in gold, and wearing a fez. This is the Bach Tchokadar, an officer whose duty it was to carry the pelisses of the Grand Seignior when he went forth. Then comes the Tchaouch Agassi (Chief of the Ushers), in his gold stuff robe, his cashmere girdle fastened by metallic plates, and bristling with a whole arsenal. His gold cap ends in a crescent, one horn in front and one behind, a fantastic head-dress that recalls the lunar Isis. This Chief of the Ushers, who would not be

out of place at the gate of a palace of Thebes or Memphis, has in his hand an iron rod with bifurcated handle not unlike the Nilometer, — another Egyptian resemblance. This rod is the badge of his functions. An Aga of the Seraglio comes next, in a white silk robe drawn in by a sash with gold plates. He wears a cylindrical cap. This other manikin, dressed in the same way save that his golden head-dress swells out into four curves at the top like the *chapska* of a Polish lancer, is a dilciz or mute, one of the sinister beings who executed secret justice or vengeance, who passed around the neck of the rebellious pachas the fatal bow-string, and whose silent apparition made the most intrepid turn pale.

Now come in a group the Serikdji Bachi, who have charge of the turbans of the Grand Seignior, the cooks, the gardeners with red caps like those worn by Catalans, which fall over like a pocket; the porters, the curly-headed Baltadgis with Persian caps; the Soulaks with apricot-coloured dolmans and red trousers just like Rubini when he plays Othello; the Peyiks, with purple gowns and round caps surmounted by a fan-shaped aigrette. The Baltadgis, Soulaks, and Peyiks form the body-guard of the Sultan and surround

him on solemn occasions, at the Beïram, at the Courban Beïram, and when he goes in state to a mosque.

This series is closed by two fantastically dressed dwarfs. These little monsters with faces like gnomes or kobolds are scarcely thirty inches high, and could well maintain their place by the side of Perkeo, the dwarf of the Elector Charles Philip; of Bébé, the King of Poland's dwarf; of Mari-Borbola and Nicolasico Pertusato, Philip IV's dwarfs; and Tom Thumb, the gentleman dwarf. They are grotesquely hideous, and madness sneers upon their thick lips, for the dwarf and the jester are often one and the same. Thought is ill at ease in these deformed heads. Supreme power has always enjoyed this antithesis of supreme abjection. A deformed jester, chattering on the steps of the throne as he shakes his cap and bells, is a contrast which the kings of the Middle Ages always indulged in. It is not so in Turkey, where madmen are venerated as saints, but it is always pleasant, when one is a radiant sultan, to have near one a sort of human monkey to set off your own splendour.

The first dwarf is dressed in a yellow robe fastened by a golden belt, and wears a sort of cap, a caricature of a crown. The second, much more simply dressed,

has huge Mameluke trousers which fall upon his tiny slippers, and is wrapped up in a benich with dragging sleeves, looking like a child who, for fun, has put on his grandfather's clothes. His dark-coloured turban has nothing peculiar. The office of dwarf has not been given up at the Turkish court; it is still honourably filled. In my description of the Beïram I gave a sketch of the Sultan Abdul Medjid's dwarf, a broad, squat monster disguised in the costume of a pacha of the Reform.

In the same case is seen a sick aga being dragged by servants in a sort of two-wheeled bier, which reminded me of the travelling-chaise of Charles V preserved in the Armeria at Madrid. Nowadays agas in good health drive about in coupés and carriages, for Paris and Vienna send their finest works in this line to Constantinople, whence will soon disappear the talikas with painted and gilded bodies, and the characteristic arabas drawn by great gray oxen. Most true it is that local colour is vanishing everywhere.

The remaining portion of the museum comprises the corps of the Janissaries, which is there in its entirety just as if Sultan Mahmoud had not had them shot down on Etmeïdan Square. There are specimens

of each kind. But perhaps before I describe the costumes of the Janissaries, I ought to give some idea of their organisation.

The Yeni tcheri (new troop) were established by Amurat IV, who proposed to have a picked corps, a special guard on whose devotion he could unfailingly reckon. His slaves formed the nucleus of the corps, which later was augmented by recruits and prisoners of war. Europeans, unfamiliar with the intonations of Oriental speech, have corrupted the name Yeni tcheri into Janissary, which unfortunately suggests a different root and apparently means keepers of the gate.

The orta (corps) of the Yeni tcheri was divided into odas or rooms, and the different officers bore culinary titles, comical at first sight, yet easily explained; tchorbadgi or soup-maker, achasi or cook, karacoulloudji or scullion, sakka or water-carrier, strike one as curious military grades. To accord with this culinary hierarchy, each oda, besides its standard, had for ensign a stewpan marked with the regimental number. On days of revolt these stewpans were overset, and the sultan paled within his Seraglio; for the Yeni tcheri were not always satisfied with a few heads, and a

revolt sometimes became a revolution. Enjoying high pay, better fed, backed by privileges which had been granted to them or which they had extorted, the Janissaries ended by forming a nation within the nation, and their aga was one of the most important personages in the empire.

The aga in the Elbiceï Atika is superbly dressed. The most precious furs line his pelisse stiff with gold; his turban is of fine India muslin; his cashmere sash supports a panoply of priceless weapons with damask blades, gem-incrusted hilts, pistols with silver or gold butts, studded with garnets, turquoises, and rubies. Elegant slippers of yellow morocco artistically embroidered complete this noble and rich dress, which is equal to that of the greatest dignitaries.

By the aga's side I may place the santon, Bektak Emin Baba, the patron of the corps. This santon had blessed the orta of the Yeni tcheri on its formation, and his memory was greatly venerated. His name was invoked in battle, in danger, and in critical times. Bektak Emin Baba does not shine, like the aga, by the splendour of his costume. His dress, exceedingly simple, marks his renunciation of earthly vanities. It consists of a sort of gown of white wool drawn in by a

brown sash, and a fez of whitish felt not unlike the cap worn by the Whirling Dervishes. The fez has no silk tuft, but a narrow border of dark-coloured plush. The tight-fitting breeches, coming down to the knee, show the bony, tanned legs of the holy man. He has in his hand a little horn with a copper mouthpiece, the meaning of which attribute I am ignorant of.

Uniform, as we understand it, was not in accordance with the habits of the times, consequently fancy had pretty free play in the costumes of the Yeni tcheri. The various ranks are distinguished by some quaint sign, but the garments are generally like those worn by the Turks at that time. It would take a lithographer's pencil or a painter's brush rather than the writer's pen, to render these varieties of cut and shades and all the details which are apt to overload a description, for in spite of all efforts it can never be quite clear to the reader's eye. Among the numerous artists, I am surprised that there was not one who cared to reproduce this precious collection in a series of water-colour sketches. It would be perfectly easy to obtain the necessary firman to work in the gallery, and the sale of the sketches would be certain, especially now that all eyes are turned towards the East.

Well, until some one does make drawings, let me note as I go a few peculiarities, some striking figures: among others, a bacha karacoulloudji or chief scullion, whose rank corresponds to that of lieutenant. He wears on his shoulder, as a badge of his dignity, a gigantic ladle which might have been taken from the sideboard of Gargantua or Gamachio. This strange decoration ends in a spear-head, no doubt to combine warlike and culinary ideas. A chater or runner, whose head seems to have been taken by a braid-maker who wanted to roll around it a long piece of white ribbon, — the innumerable twists which the stuff makes upon it form a brim not unlike the brim of a round hat. A yeni tcheri oustaci, or superior officer, flanked by an acolyte and wearing the quaintest costume imaginable; he is covered with huge, round plates of metal the size of stew-pan covers, fastened to his belt, which clang and clash. They are inlaid, chased, and curiously wrought. From the sword-hilt hangs a great brass bell like that hung in Spain around the neck of the leading ass in a train. His headgear, rounded at the top like a helmet, is divided by a copper bar, like that seen on certain morions to protect the nose against sword-cuts, and over the back falls a mass

of gray stuff spreading out behind. Full red trousers complete this accoutrement, which is as inconvenient as it is extraordinary. The heralds in ancient tourneys could not possibly be more ill at ease in their massive armours than this unfortunate yeni tcheri oustaci in his full dress. The bacha sakkacci, chief of water-bearers, is no less strangely costumed. His round, white, shapeless jacket cut like a tabard or sack coat, is imbricated and mottled with copper plates. On his shoulders a couple of jumping-jacks, also covered with metal scales, frame in his head in curious fashion. A leather water-skin is fastened on his back by straps. In his belt he has a cat-o'-nine-tails. Farther on are two officers carrying the orta stewpan on a long stick passed through the handle. On the stewpan itself figures in relief indicate the regimental number.

A detailed description of the candle-lighter, of the alms-basin bearer, of the baklava-bearer, and of the gracioso with his fur cap and his tarboush, would lead me too far. I will mention merely the figures of the bombardiers (kombaradji), who formed part of the corps established by Ahmed Pacha (Count de Bonneval), a famous renegade whose tomb still exists at the tekieh of the Whirling Dervishes at Pera, one of the soldiers

of the Nizam Djedid instituted by the Sultan Selim to counterbalance the influence of the Janissaries. It is from the time of this corps, formed from the remains of the militia of Saint Jean d'Acre, that dates the introduction of uniform among Ottoman Turks. The costume of the Nizam Djedid is very like that of the zouaves and *spahis* of our African army. A few specimens of Greeks, Armenians, and Arnaouts complete the collection.

When traversing the Elbiceï Atika, and passing before these closets filled with the phantoms of bygone days, one cannot help feeling melancholy and wondering if it was not an impulse of involuntary prescience that urged the Turks to make this collection of their ancient national dress, their own national life being so threatened to-day.

MOUNT BOUGOURLOU
PRINCES' ISLANDS

ALTHOUGH the Turks have, properly speaking, no art, for the Koran prohibits as idolatrous the representation of living beings, they are nevertheless endowed to a very high degree with a feeling for the picturesque. Wherever there is a fine view or a pleasant prospect, there is certain to be a kiosk, a fountain, and a few Osmanlis resting on their carpets, remaining for hours at a time perfectly motionless, their gaze wandering dreamily over the distance, and puffing from time to time clouds of blue smoke. Mount Bougourlou, which rises behind Kadikeuï somewhat back of Scutari and from the top of which there is a superb panorama of the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmora, is chiefly frequented by women, who spend whole days under the trees in small companies or in harems, chatting, drinking sherbet, watching their children playing, and listening to the quaint music of the perambulating singers.

My talika, drawn by a stout horse led by the driver on foot, followed at first the seashore, the water often rippling up to the wheels. We passed along the scattered houses of Kadikeuï, crossed the Haïdar Pacha drill-ground, whence start every year the pilgrims to Mecca, traversed the vast cypress wood of the Field of the Dead behind Scutari, and ascended the steep slopes of Mount Bougourlou by a rutty, stony, rocky road, often barred by the roots of trees and narrowed by the projection of houses; for it must be confessed that the Turks are, so far as roads go, utterly careless. Two hundred carriages will in one day wind around a stone in the centre of the road, or smash against it, without a single driver bethinking himself of moving the obstacle out of the way. In my case, in spite of the jolts and the necessarily slow pace, the drive was very agreeable and very animated. Carriages were coming and going; arabas drawn by oxen bore companies of six or eight women; talikas had four seated opposite each other, cross-legged upon pieces of Smyrna carpet, all splendidly dressed, their hair starred with diamonds and gems that sparkled through the muslin of their veils. Sometimes in a modern brougham swept by a pacha's favourite.

There were also many horsemen and pedestrians, climbing more or less gaily the steep flanks of the mountain, and zigzagging up and down.

On a sort of plateau half-way up, beyond which horses cannot go, there was a large number of carriages waiting for their owners, and exhibiting samples of Turkish carriage-making of various epochs, most entertaining and forming a picturesque mass which would have made a pretty subject for a painting. I had my talika draw up in a place where I could be sure to find it again, and continued the ascent. Here and there, on tree-shaded terraces, were Turkish or Armenian families, recognisable by their black or yellow boots and their more or less veiled faces. Of course, when I speak of a family, I mean women only. Men go by themselves and never accompany the females.

At the top of the mountain were cavadjis with their portable stoves, water and sherbet sellers, dealers in sweets and confectionery, the inevitable accompaniment of any Turkish entertainment. Very bright indeed was the sight of the women dressed in rose, green, blue, lilac, diapering the sward like flowers and enjoying the coolness under the shadow of plane-trees

and sycamores; for although it was very hot, the elevation and the sea-breeze combined to produce a delightful temperature.

Young Greek girls, crowned with their diadems of hair, had linked hands and were swinging round to a soft, quaint air, looking against the clear background of the sky like the "Procession of Hours" in Guido's fresco. The Turks viewed them with considerable disdain, unable to understand why people should exert themselves for their own amusement, and least of all, why people should dance for themselves.

I walked on, climbing until I reached a group of seven trees which crowned the mountain like a plume. From this point the whole length of the Bosphorus is seen, as well as the Sea of Marmora with the Princes' Islands, forming a marvellously beautiful prospect. The Bosphorus, shining in places from between its brown banks, appears like a series of lakes; the curves of the shore and the promontories which project into the water seem to narrow it and to close it here and there. The undulations of the hills bordering this marine river are incomparably exquisite. The serpentine line of the torso of a beautiful woman lying down, her hip rising, is neither more voluptuous nor more perfect.

A silvery, tender, bright light like that of a ceiling by Paolo Veronese enwraps the vast landscape in its transparent veils. In the west, on the European shore, Constantinople, with its fringe of minarets; in the east, a vast plain traversed by a road leading to the mysterious depths of Asia; on the north, the mouth of the Black Sea and the Cimmerian regions; on the south, Mount Olympus, Bithynia, the Troad, and in the distant horizon pierced by thought, Greece and its archipelago. What most attracted my attention was the vast, desert, bare country, whither in fancy I followed the caravans, dreaming of strange adventures and startling episodes.

I descended, after half an hour of mute contemplation, to the plateau occupied by the groups of smokers, women, and children. A great circle had formed around a band of Hungarian gipsies playing on the violin and singing ballads in *Calô* dialect. Their tanned faces, their long, blue-black hair, their exotic, crazy looks, their savage and queer grimaces, and their picturesquely extravagant rags made me think of Lenau's poem, "The Bohemians on the Heath," — four stanzas only, but which fill you with the nostalgia of the unknown and the liveliest desire to lead a wandering life.

Whence comes that unchanging race, ever the same, members of which are found in every corner of the world, among different populations, which it traverses without ever mingling with them? From India, no doubt, and it is probably some pariah tribe that refused to accept fatal abjection. I rarely come across a gipsy camp without desiring to join them and share their vagabond existence, — the wild man ever survives in the skin of the civilised; and it needs but a slight circumstance to awaken the desire to get rid of social laws and conventionalities. It is true that after spending a week sleeping by the side of a waggon with an open-air kitchen, one would be apt to regret slippers, a comfortable armchair, a curtained bed, and especially the steak à la Châteaubriant washed down by prime claret, that has gone to India and back, or even the evening edition of the paper. But the feeling which I expressed is none the less genuine.

Highly developed civilisation weighs down upon the individual, and deprives him, in a way, of the possession of himself, in return for the general advantages which it procures; hence I have heard many a traveller say there was no more delightful sensation than to gallop alone in a desert at sunrise with pistols in your belt

and a carbine at your saddlebow; no one watching over you, but no one troubling you either; liberty filling the silence and solitude, and God alone above. I have myself felt something like this when travelling alone on some of the lonely roads of Spain and Algeria.

I found my talika and its driver where I had left them, and we began the descent, an unpleasant business on account of the steepness of the slope and the condition of the road, which I cannot better compare than to a ruined staircase demolished in places. The syce held the horse's head. The latter every minute had to lean back on its hind legs, while the carriage pressed down upon its quarters; jolts fit to jerk out the best fastened heart threw me forward when I least expected it; and so, though I was rather tired, I determined to get out and follow the carriage on foot.

Arabas and talikas full of women and children were also coming down Bougourlou, and at every unexpected jolt there were bursts of laughter and shouts. A whole row of women would tumble down on the opposite row, and rivals embraced each other most involuntarily. The oxen stiffened themselves as best they could against the asperities of the way, and the horses went down with the prudence of animals accustomed to bad

roads. The horsemen galloped straight on as if they were on a level, sure of their Kurdish or Barb steeds. It was a charming pell-mell, thoroughly Turkish in aspect. Although a space of but a few minutes separates the shore of Asia from that of Europe, local colour has been much better preserved in the former, and far fewer Franks are met with.

The road having somewhat improved, I climbed back into the carriage, looking out of the window at the painted houses, the cypresses, and the turbehs which border the road, forming sometimes a sort of island in the centre of the street like Saint Mary le Strand. My driver took me through Scutari, which we had skirted in going through the Haïdar Pacha drill-ground, and then along the seashore as far as the landing-place at Kadikeuï where the steamer was getting under way and sending up clouds of black smoke.

The embarking of the women passengers was the cause of much tumult and laughter. An almost perpendicular board formed the connection between the wharf and the boat; it was very difficult to climb; and in addition, the rail had to be stepped over, which was the cause of a great many rather funnily modest and virtuous grimaces. Night was falling when the steamer

landed its human cargo at Galata, after having shaken it up and down like a swing.

As I had nearly exhausted the curiosities of Constantinople, I resolved to spend a few days at the Princes' Islands, a tiny archipelago in the Sea of Marmora at the entrance to the Bosphorus, which has the reputation of being a very healthy and pleasant resort. The Islands are seven in number: Proti, Antigone, Kalki, Prinkipo, Nikandro, Oxeia, Plati, besides two or three islets which are not reckoned in. Prinkipo is the largest and most frequented of these marine flowers, lighted by the bright Anatolian sun and cooled by the fresh morning and evening breeze. They are reached by English or Turkish steamers in about an hour and a half. The Prinkipo shore shows, on coming from Constantinople, as a high cliff with reddish scarps topped by a line of houses. Wooden stairs or steep paths forming acute angles lead from the cliff top to the seashore, which is bordered by wooden bathing-huts. The explosion of a bomb gives warning that the steamer is in sight, and immediately a fleet of caïques and boats leaves the shore to meet the passengers, for the small depth of water will not allow vessels to approach close.

Rooms had been reserved for me beforehand in the only inn in the island, a clean, bright wooden house shaded by great trees, from the windows of which the view extended over the sea to the very confines of the horizon; opposite was Kalki, with its Turkish village reflected in the sea and its mountains surmounted by a Greek convent. The water laved the cliff at the foot of which was perched the inn, and I could go down in my dressing-gown and slippers and enjoy a delicious bath on a long, sandy beach.

In the evening the Armenian and Greek women rival each other in dress and walk on the narrow space between the houses and the shore. The heaviest and thickest silks are then exhibited, diamonds sparkle in the moonbeams, and bare arms are laden with those enormous gold bracelets with many chains peculiar to Constantinople, and which our jewellers ought to imitate, for they impart slenderness to the wrist and set off the hand to great advantage.

Armenian families are as fruitful as English families, and it is not uncommon to see a stout matron preceded by four or five girls, each prettier than the others, and as many very lively boys. As the ladies walk out bareheaded in low-necked dresses, the promenade looks like

an open-air opera audience. A few Parisian bonnets are to be seen, as on the Prado at Madrid, but they are not numerous.

In the cafés, which all have terraces on the seaside, people eat ices made of the snows of Olympus in Bithynia, or sip tiny cups of coffee with glasses of water, and smoke tobacco in every possible way, in chibouques, in nargilehs, and in the form of cigars and cigarettes.

From time to time a blue glare like that of an electric light startingly lights up the façade of a house, a clump of trees, or a group of people, who turn around and smile. It is a lover, burning Bengal lights in honour of his sweetheart or his bride. There must be a great many lovers in Prinkipo, for one light had no sooner gone out than another flared up. Then, little by little, every one goes home, and about midnight the whole island is soundly and virtuously asleep.

Walking and sea-bathing form the attractions of Prinkipo. In order to improve on them, I went with a pleasant young fellow whose acquaintance I had made at the table d'hôte, on a long excursion on ass's back into the interior of the island. We first traversed the village, the market-place of which was delightful to

the eye with its masses of quaintly shaped cucumbers, watermelons, Smyrna melons, tomatoes, pimentoes, grapes, and curious wares. Then we followed the sea, sometimes close, sometimes at a distance, through woods and cultivated fields, as far as the house of a pope, a good liver, who had us served with raki and ice-water by a very handsome girl. Then, passing around the end of the island, we reached an old Greek monastery in rather bad condition and now used as a lunatic asylum. Three or four poor ragged wretches, pale and mournful looking, were dragging themselves with clanking chains along the walls of a yard blazing with sunshine. We were shown in the chapel some inferior paintings with gold backgrounds and brown faces, such as are manufactured at Mount Athos from Byzantine models for the use of the Greek Church. The Panagia exhibited as usual its brown face and hands through a silver or silver-gilt plate cut out, and the Child Jesus appeared as a little negro boy with a trefoil nimbus. Saint George, the patron of the place, was overwhelming the dragon in the regulation attitude.

The situation of the convent is superb. It is placed upon the platform of a rocky cliff, and from the terrace

the eye can wander through the two limitless azures, — that of the heavens and that of the sea. We returned by another and wilder road, through clumps of myrtles, of terebinth-trees and pines which grow of themselves, and which the inhabitants cut down for firewood. We reached the inn at last, to the great satisfaction of our asses, which had had to be beaten and spurred on vigorously to prevent their going to sleep on the way; for we had been foolish enough not to take the driver with us, an indispensable personage in such a caravan, as Eastern asses have a great contempt for the *bourgeois*, and are in no wise troubled by a thrashing from them.

Four or five days later, having become sufficiently acquainted with the charms of Prinkipo, I started on an excursion on the Bosphorus from Seraglio Point to the entrance to the Black Sea.

CONSTANTINOPLE

THE BOSPHORUS

THE Bosphorus, from Seraglio Point to the entrance to the Black Sea, is constantly traversed by steamers, like the Thames. The caïdjis who formerly reigned despotically over its green, swift waters, now watch the steam vessels go by just as postilions look at railway trains, and consider Fulton's invention absolutely diabolical. However, there are still obstinate Turks and poltroon giaours who use caïques to ascend the Bosphorus, just as with us there are people who, in spite of the railways on the right and left bank, go to Versailles and Saint Cloud in coaches; but they are becoming rarer every day, and the Mussulmans get along capitally with the steamers. Indeed, steamers interest them greatly, and there is not a café or a barber's shop the walls of which are not adorned by a number of drawings in which the artless artist has depicted a steamer as well as he could, the smoke escaping from the funnel and the paddles churning the foaming waters.

I went on board at the Galata Bridge on the Golden Horn, which is the starting-point of the steamers that lie there in great numbers, sending out their black and white vapour, condensed into a permanent cloud, into the light azure of the sky. London Bridge or the Suspension Bridge does not exhibit more animation, a more tumultuous crowd than this landing, the approach to which is very inconvenient; for to reach the boats, one has to get over the railings of the bridge of boats, step over logs, and pass over rotting or broken beams. Nor is it easy to unmoor; nevertheless the sailors manage it, not without colliding occasionally with the neighbouring boats; and at last a start is made. Very shortly the open water is gained, and then you steam along quietly between a double line of palaces, kiosks, villages, gardens, upon bright waters of emerald and sapphire, with a wake of pearls, under the loveliest heavens in the world, in a bright sunshine which makes rainbows in the silvery spray of the paddle-wheels. There is nothing to be compared, to my knowledge, with this two hours' sail upon that lovely line of shore drawn like a boundary between the two parts of the world, Europe and Asia, which are seen at one and the same time.

The Maiden's Tower soon emerges, with its white silhouette showing so charmingly against the blue background of the waters; Scutari and Top Khaneh next appear; above Top Khaneh the Tower of Galata raises its verdigrised conical roof, and on the slope of the hill are the stone houses of the Europeans, the painted wooden homes of the Turks. Here and there a white minaret sends up its slender column like the mast of a vessel; a few clumps of dark green show in round outlines. The massive buildings of the legations exhibit their façades, and the Great Field of the Dead unrolls its cypresses, against which stand out bright the artillery barracks and the military college. Scutari, the Golden City, Chrysopolis, has a similar aspect, the dark foliage of a cemetery forming likewise a background to its rose-coloured houses and white-washed mosques. On both sides life has death behind it, and each city is encircled by suburbs of tombs. But these thoughts, which would elsewhere be gloomy, in no wise trouble the serene fatalism of the East.

On the European shore one soon comes upon Tcheragan, a palace built by Mahmoud in European style with a classical façade like that of the Chamber of Deputies, in the centre of which is the monogram

of the Sultan in letters of gold; it has two wings supported by Doric columns in Greek marbles. I confess that in the East I prefer Arab or Turkish architecture; and yet this grand building, the broad, white stairs of which descend to the sea, is very effective. In front of the palace a splendid caïque with gilded and painted purple awning, bearing on the poop a silver bird, was awaiting His Highness.

Opposite, beyond Scutari, is a long line of summer palaces, painted apple-green, shaded with plane-trees, arbutus and ash trees, most smiling in appearance, and in spite of their trellised windows, recalling aviaries rather than prisons. These palaces are built on the shore close to the water's edge.

Between Dolma Baghtchech and Beshicktash is the Venetian façade of the new palace built for Sultan Abdul Medjid. If it is not in the very best of taste, it is at least quaintly rich and capricious. The white silhouette, carved, wrought, chiselled, and loaded with infinite ornament, stands out elegantly on the bank. It is unmistakably the palace of a caliph tired of Arab and Persian architecture, and who, disdainful of the five orders, has built for himself a vast marble gem traceried like filigree.

Dolma Baghtchech was formerly called Jasonion, for it was here that Jason landed with his Argonauts on his quest for the Golden Fleece.

The steamer runs close by the European shore, on which calling-places are more frequent. As we pass the café of Beschicktash, we can see the smokers squatting in their trellised cabinets, that overhang the water. Soon we leave behind Ortakeuï and Kouroutcheshmeh on the shore, behind which rise in undulating lines hills covered with trees, gardens, houses, and smiling villages.

From one village to the other runs an uninterrupted line of palaces and summer residences. The Sultana Valideh, the Sultan's sisters, the viziers, the ministers, the pachas, the great dignitaries have all built here lovely dwellings with a thorough knowledge of Oriental comfort, which is not like English comfort, but is just as good.

These palaces are built of wood, except the pillars, which are usually cut out of a single block of Marmora marble, or taken from the remains of ancient buildings. Their fugitive grace is none the less elegant. The stories project over each other, there are angles and projections, kiosks with Chinese roofs, pavilions with

terraces adorned with vases, and the paint is constantly renewed. In the cedar-wood gratings of the windows of the apartments reserved for the women are round holes like those made in stage curtains, through which the actors inspect the house and the spectators. It is there that, seated upon squares of carpet, nonchalant beauties watch unseen the vessels, the steamers, and the caïques, while they chew Chios mastic to keep their teeth white. A narrow granite quay, which forms a tow-path, separates these pretty places from the sea.

Near Arnaoutkeuï the waters of the Bosphorus surge and boil, owing to a rapid current called *mega reuma* (the great current). The blue water flashes like an arrow past the narrow quay. There, however muscular may be their sun-tanned arms, the caïdjis feel the sweeps bend in their hands like the blades of a fan, and if they were to attempt to contend with this fierce current, their sweeps would snap like glass rods. The Bosphorus is full of such currents, which vary in their direction, and make it seem more a river than an arm of the sea. On reaching this point a rope is hove from the boat to the land, three or four men hang on to it like tow-horses, and bending their broad shoulders, draw the craft along, its cut-water sending up a great

surge of white foam. The rapid crossed, the sweeps are shipped and the boat traverses without difficulty the dead water. At the foot of the houses are often seen groups of three or four Turkish women seated by the side of their children playing. On the quay young Greek girls are walking, holding each other by the hand and casting inquisitive glances at the European travellers; horsemen pass by, watermen are hauling a private caïque into a boat-house, — figures, indeed, are rarely lacking in the scene.

My readers are now sufficiently familiar with the architecture of the place to render it unnecessary for me to describe the houses of Arnaoutkeuï. I shall, however, note as peculiar some old Armenian dwellings painted black, a colour formerly compulsory, the brighter tints belonging rightfully to the Turks and the ox-blood red and *rosso antico* to the Greeks. Nowadays a house may be painted in any colour except green, the colour of Islam, reserved for hadjis and descendants of the Prophet.

On the Asiatic coast, more wooded and shaded than that of Europe, villages, palaces, and kiosks succeed each other less closely, perhaps, but still numerous. There are Kouskoundjouk, Stavros, Beylerbey, where

Mahmoud had a summer residence built, Tchengelkeuï, Vanikeuï, and opposite Bebek the Sweet Waters of Asia.

A lovely white-marble fountain, embroidered with arabesques and covered with inscriptions and gilded letters, surmounted by a great roof with broad, shelving eaves and small domes surmounted by crescents, which is seen from the sea and stands out against the rich background of verdure, points out to the traveller this favourite resort of the Osmanlis. The vast extent of ground, covered with rich sward and enclosed by ash-trees, plane-trees, and sycamores, is covered on Fridays with arabas and talikas, and on Smyrna carpets loll the idle beauties of the harem. The negro eunuchs, slapping their white trousers with the end of their wands, walk between the groups, looking for some sly glance, some sign of intelligence, especially if there happens to be there a giaour trying to penetrate from afar the mysteries concealed by the yashmak and the ferradje. Sometimes the women fasten shawls to the branches of the trees and swing their children in these improvised hammocks; others eat rose preserves and drink snow water; others again smoke the narghileh or cigarette; all gossip and slander the Frankish ladies,

who are so shameless as to expose themselves with uncovered faces, and walk with men in the streets.

Farther off, Bulgarian peasants wearing the antique sagum and fur-trimmed cap perform their national dance in hope of bakshîsh; cavadjis are preparing coffee in the open air; Jews, their gowns slit on the sides, their turbans spotted with black like a cloth on which pens are wiped, offer various small wares to the passers-by with the servile, mean look of Eastern Hebrews, always bowed under the fear of insult. Caïdjis are smoking, seated on the edge of the quay, with their legs hanging over, while they watch their boats out of the corner of their eye.

It would take too much time to describe, one after another, all these villages which follow each other and are like each other, although with some differences. It is always the same line of painted white houses like the toy villages of Nuremberg, rising along the quay, or else directly out of the water when there is no tow-path, and standing out against the background of rich verdure, from which spring the chalk-white minarets of a chapel or a small mosque. Beyond, the hills, with their soft, easy slopes, rise exquisitely blue in the light of heaven. At times one might wish for a steeper

escarpment, for an arid cliff, for a mass of rock breaking through the ground; everything is too graceful, too smiling, too coquettish, too artificial; one feels the need of strong, violent touches here and there to set off the general beauty.

At certain points in the stream are perched upon a scaffolding of piles curious and picturesque erections like hen-coops, in which fishermen sit watching the passage of schools of fish in order to give notice of the right moment for shooting or hauling in the net. Sometimes they fall asleep and plunge head first from their aerial perch into the water, where they are drowned without even awaking. These look-outs, very like the nests of aquatic birds, seem to have been built for the purpose of providing foregrounds for painters.

At this point the two banks draw very close together. This is the place where Darius led his army across on his expedition against the Scythians, over the bridge built by Mandrocles of Samos. Two hundred thousand men traversed it, a gigantic aggregation of Asiatic hordes with exotic faces, curious arms, fabulous accoutrements, their cavalry mingled with elephants and camels. On two stone pillars erected at the head of the bridge were engraved the names of all the nations

that marched behind Darius. These pillars rose at the very spot now occupied by the château of Guzeldje Hissar built by Bayezid Ilderim, Bajazet the God of War.

Mandrocles, Herodotus tells us, painted a picture of this crossing and hung it in the temple of Juno in Samos, his native country, with this inscription: "Mandrocles, having built a bridge upon the Bosphorus full of fish, dedicated this painting to Juno. By carrying out this project of King Darius, Mandrocles brought glory to Samos, winning a crown." The Bosphorus is four hundred yards wide at this place, and it is here that crossed the Persians, the Goths, the Latins, and the Turks. The invaders, whether coming from Asia or Europe, followed the same route. All these great inundations of nations flowed along the same bed, and surged along the road made by Darius.

The Castle of Europe, Roumeli Hissar, also called Bogas Keçin (cutthroat), shows uncommonly well on the slope of the hill with its white towers of unequal height and its crenellated walls. The three large towers and the smaller by the seashore form in reverse, according to Turkish writing, the four letters, M, H, M, D, which are the name of the founder, Mohammed II. This architectural rebus, which cannot be guessed,

recalls the plan of the Escorial representing the gridiron of Saint Lawrence, in honour of whom the monastery was built. This peculiarity is observable only if one has been told of it beforehand. The Castle of Europe is opposite the Castle of Asia, Anadoli Hissar.

Near Roumeli Hissar extends a cemetery, the tall black trees and white tombstones of which are brightly reflected in the azure of the sea, and which is so bright, flowery, and perfumed that one feels a desire to be buried there. The dead lying in that bright garden, enlivened by the sun and full of song-birds, surely do not suffer from ennui.

The steamer, after having passed Balta Liman, Stenia, Yenikeuï, and Kalender, stops at Therapia, a village the Greek name of which means "cure," — an appellation justified by the salubrious air. It is here that the French embassy has its summer palace. In the graceful little neighbouring gulf, — a golden cup filled with sapphires, — Medea, returning from Colchis with Jason, landed and opened the box containing her magic drugs and philters; whence the name of Pharmaceus formerly given to Therapia.

Therapia is a delightful spot. The quay is bordered with cafés ornamented with a luxury rather rare in

Turkey, inns, summer homes, and gardens. In a passage leading to the landing-place I noticed in the stones of the wall two marble torsos, the one of a man wearing an antique cuirass, the other of a woman veiled in broken draperies, which the barbaric builders had set amid the other stones like common material. The palace of the French embassy, which is to be rebuilt with greater solidity, richness, and taste, is a large Turkish building of white pisé, without any architectural merit, but vast, airy, commodious, and cool even in the greatest summer heats, and situated, besides, on the loveliest site on earth. Behind the palace rise terraced gardens filled with trees of prodigious height, constantly agitated by the breezes of the Black Sea. From the top one enjoys a marvellous prospect. On the shores of Asia spread out the cool shades of the Waters of the Sultan; beyond these the Giant's Mount shows blue, and there it is that tradition places the bed of Hercules. On the European shore Buyoukdereh curves gracefully, and the Bosphorus, beyond Roumeli Kavak and Anadoli Kavak, bends out to the Cyanean Islands and is lost in the Black Sea. White sails come and go like sea-birds; thought is lost in an infinite reverie.

CONSTANTINOPLE

BUYOUKDEREH

BUYOUKDEREH, which is seen from the Therapia terrace, is one of the loveliest summer villages in the world. On the curving shore the waves curl in gentle ripples; elegant dwellings, among which is noticed the summer palace of the Russian Embassy, rise on the seashore against a background of green gardens at the foot of the lower slopes of the hills that form the bed of the Bosphorus. Rich Constantinople merchants have here summer homes, to which they come every evening by steamer and whence they go back to town the next morning.

On the Buyoukdereh shore walk after sunset beautiful Greek and Armenian ladies in full dress. The lights of the cafés and the houses mingle on the waters with the silver trail of the moon and the reflections of the stars; a breeze saturated with perfumes and coolness blows gently and makes the air like a fan handled by the invisible hands of night; orchestras of Hungarian gipsies play Strauss' waltzes, and the boulboul

sings the poem of its loves with the rose, concealed in clumps of myrtle. After a warm summer's day this balmy atmosphere is delightfully comfortable and reviving, and it is regretfully that one turns into bed.

The hotel recently built in Buyoukdereh, and rendered necessary by the number of travellers who did not know where to spend the night or did not care to take advantage of the hospitality of their Constantinople friends, is very well kept. It has a large garden in which rises a superb plane-tree in the branches of which has been built a pavilion in which I breakfasted under the shelter of the dentellated and silky foliage. As I marvelled at the size of the tree, I was told that in a meadow at the end of the High Street of Buyoukdereh there is a very much larger one, known as Godefroy de Bouillon's plane-tree. I went to see it, and at the first glance I thought I beheld a forest rather than a tree. The trunk, formed of seven or eight stems twisted together, looked like a tower rent in places; enormous roots like boa-constrictors half concealed within their holes, anchored it to the ground; the branches that issued from it looked rather like horizontal trees than ordinary limbs. In its sides opened black caverns formed by the rotting wood that had turned to powder under the

bark. Shepherds take shelter there as in grottoes, and light fires without the vegetable giant minding it any more than the ants that travel over its rough bark. Most majestic and picturesque is this monstrous mass of foliage, over which centuries have passed like raindrops, and under the shadow of which rose the tents of the heroes sung by Tasso in "Jerusalem Delivered." But I must not indulge in poetry. Here comes history, which as usual contradicts tradition. Scholars maintain that Godefroy de Bouillon never camped under this plane-tree, and they cite in support of their contention a passage from Anna Komnenius, a contemporary, which gives the lie to the legend: "Then Count Godefroy de Bouillon, having made the passage with the other counts and an army composed of ten thousand horsemen and seventy thousand footmen, reached the great city and drew up his troops in the neighbourhood of the Propontis from the Cosmidion Bridge to Saint Phocas." This is clear and decisive, but as the legend, in spite of the text quoted by the learned, cannot be wrong, Count Raoul established his camp at Buyoukdereh with the other Latin Crusaders until he could cross over to Asia, and the exact memory of the event having been lost, the ancient plane-tree was baptised with

the better known name of Godefroy de Bouillon, which for the people sums up more particularly the idea of the Crusades. Whatever the truth may be, the thousand-year-old tree is still standing, full of nests and sunbeams, watching the years fall at its feet like leaves, becoming more colossal and more robust from age to age, while the desert wind has long since scattered on the sand of Palestine the dust of the Crusaders.

When I visited the plane-tree of Godefroy de Bouillon an araba was drawn up under the branches; the oxen, freed from the yoke, had lain down in the grass and were gravely chewing the cud with an air of serene beatitude, shaking from time to time the silvery foam from their black mouths. Their drivers were cooking their frugal meal in one of the fissures of the tree, a sort of natural chimney with a hearth made of two stones. It was a lovely picture, ready grouped and composed. I had a great mind to go and fetch Theodore Frère from his studio in Buyoukdereh to make a coloured sketch of it; but the araba would have started again, or the sunbeam that so picturesquely lighted up the scene would have vanished before the arrival of the artist. Besides, Frère has in his port-

folios endless similar scenes, which often recur in Oriental life.

It was a lovely day, and I resolved to return the same evening to Constantinople in a two-pair scull caïque, pulled by two robust Arnaouts with shaven temples and cheeks, and long, fair moustaches. Although it was after ten when I started, it was very bright, and certainly brighter than in London at noon. It was not night, but rather a bluish day of infinite sweetness and transparency. I settled myself very carefully in the stern, my coat buttoned up to the neck, for the dew was falling in a fine, silvery mist like the night tears of the stars, and the bottom of the boat was quite wet. My Arnaouts had pulled on a jacket over their striped gauze shirts, and we began the descent of the Bosphorus.

The caïque, helped by the current and driven by four vigorous arms, flew almost as fast as the steamer through the luminous shimmering water sparkling with innumerable spangles. The hills and projections of the shore cast great violet shadows that broke the bright silveriness of the waters, on which the outlines of the vessels at anchor, with their sails furled and their delicate rigging, showed as if they were cut out of black

paper. A few lights shone here and there on the ships or in the windows of the villages. No other sound was heard than the cadenced breathing of the rowers, the regular rhythm of the sculls, the rippling of the water and the distant bark of some wakeful dog. From time to time a meteor traversed the heavens and died out like a firework shell; the Milky Way unrolled its white zone with a brilliancy and a sharpness unknown to our vaporous Northern nights, the stars shone even within the aureole of the moon. It was a marvellous, magnificent, quiet, and serenely splendid scene. As I admired the vault of lapis-lazuli veined with gold, I asked myself, Why are the heavens so splendid when the earth is asleep, and why do the stars waken only when eyes close? No one sees this fairy illumination; it is lighted for the night eyes of owls, bats, and cats alone. Does the Divine Scene-Painter so despise the public that He exhibits his finest canvases after the spectators have gone to bed? That would not be very flattering to our human pride, but earth is merely an imperceptible point, a grain lost in eternity, and as Victor Hugo says, "The normal state of the heavens is night."

It was striking one when I landed at Top Khaneh. I lighted my lantern, and climbing the deserted streets, taking care not to trample on the troops of sleeping dogs which moaned as I went by, I regained my lodgings in the Field of the Dead at Pera, worn out but delighted.

The next day, continuing my tour, I walked to the Sweet Waters of Europe at the upper end of the Golden Horn. Crossing the three bridges of boats, the last of which, recently finished, was constructed at the expense of a rich Armenian, I passed by the Naval Arsenal, where under the sheds are the frames of vessels like skeletons of cachalots or whales. I passed between Eyoub and Piri Pacha and soon entered the archipelago, the little, low, flat islands that separate the mouths of the Cydaris and the Barbyses, which flow into each other shortly before falling into the sea. The Turkish names substituted for these two harmonious appellations are Sou Kiat Hana and Ali Bey Keuï.

Herons and storks, their bills resting upon their breasts, and one foot drawn up under their wings, watch you with friendly look; gulls sweep by and hawks soar in circles above. The farther you proceed, the more the sound of Constantinople dies away, solitude

grows apace, the country replaces the city by insensible transitions. No one traverses the elegant Chinese bridges across the Barbyses, which might be taken for an artificial river in an English park.

The Sweet Waters of Europe are most frequented in winter, as the Sultan has there a kiosk with artificial waters and cascades lined with pavilions in charming Turkish style. This residence was built by Mahmoud, but as it is scarcely ever inhabited and never repaired, it is almost falling into ruins, and the canal is being filled up; the disjointed stones allow the water to escape, and parasitical plants grow over the carved arabesques. It is said that Mahmoud, who had built this lovely nest for an adored odalisque, would never return to it when premature death took away the young woman. Since that time a veil of melancholy seems to have fallen over this deserted palace buried in masses of elm, ash, walnut, sycamore, and plane trees, that seem desirous of concealing it from the traveller's eyes like the thick forest around the Castle of the Sleeping Beauty; and the leafy tears of the great weeping willows sadly drop into the waters.

There was no one there that day, but it was none the less pleasant. After having wandered for some

time under the solitary shades, I stopped at a little café and had some *yaourt* with a piece of bread, a frugal meal greatly called for by my appetite, sharpened as it was by the bracing sea air.

Instead of going back by caïque, I took one of the horses standing for hire at every corner and went back by Piri Pacha, Haaskeuï, and Kassim Pacha as far as San Dimitri, the Greek village near the Great Field of the Dead at Pera; and traversing vast empty spaces, I reached Okmeïdan, which might be taken from afar for a cemetery on account of the numbers of small marble columns which bristle all over it. This is the place where formerly the Sultans practised djerrid-throwing, and these little monuments are intended to perpetuate the memory of extraordinary performances and to mark the distance the dart was thrown. They are exceedingly simple, and their sole ornaments are inscriptions in Turkish letters, with sometimes a gilded copper star at the top. The djerrid has gone out of use, and the most recent of these columns is somewhat old. Ancient customs disappear and will soon be nothing but remembrances.

I had now been seventy-two days wandering about Constantinople, and I knew every corner of it. No

doubt that is little enough time in which to study the characteristics and manners of a people, but it is sufficient to give an impression of the picturesque physiognomy of a city, and that was the sole object of my trip. Life is walled in in the East, religious prejudices and habits are opposed to its being entered, the language is impracticable unless one studies it for seven or eight years; one is therefore compelled to be satisfied with the exterior panorama. A prolonged stay of several weeks more would not have taught me anything additional, — and besides, I was beginning to hunger for paintings, statues, and works of art. The everlasting masked ball in the streets was beginning to tell on my nerves; I was sick of veils, I wanted to see faces. A mystery which at first stirs the imagination becomes tiring at last, when it is plain that there is no hope of penetrating it. One soon gives it up, and merely casts a careless glance at the figures which file by; weariness comes the more quickly that the Frankish society of Pera, composed of merchants, who are very respectable no doubt, is not particularly entertaining for a poet.

So I engaged a cabin on board the Austrian steamer *Imperator* to go to Athens, the Gulf of Lepanto,

Patras, Corfu, the Mountains of the Chimera, and to reach Trieste by way of the Adriatic.

I could see on the rock of the Acropolis the white colonnade of the Parthenon showing against the sky, and the minarets of Saint Sophia no longer delighted me. My mind, turned in another direction, was no longer impressed by surrounding objects. So I left, and although I was glad to leave, I cast a last glance at Constantinople disappearing on the horizon with that indefinable melancholy which fills the heart on leaving a city that will probably never be seen again.

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